

TRAVEL AND
ADVENTURE IN
MANY LANDS

CECIL GOSLING

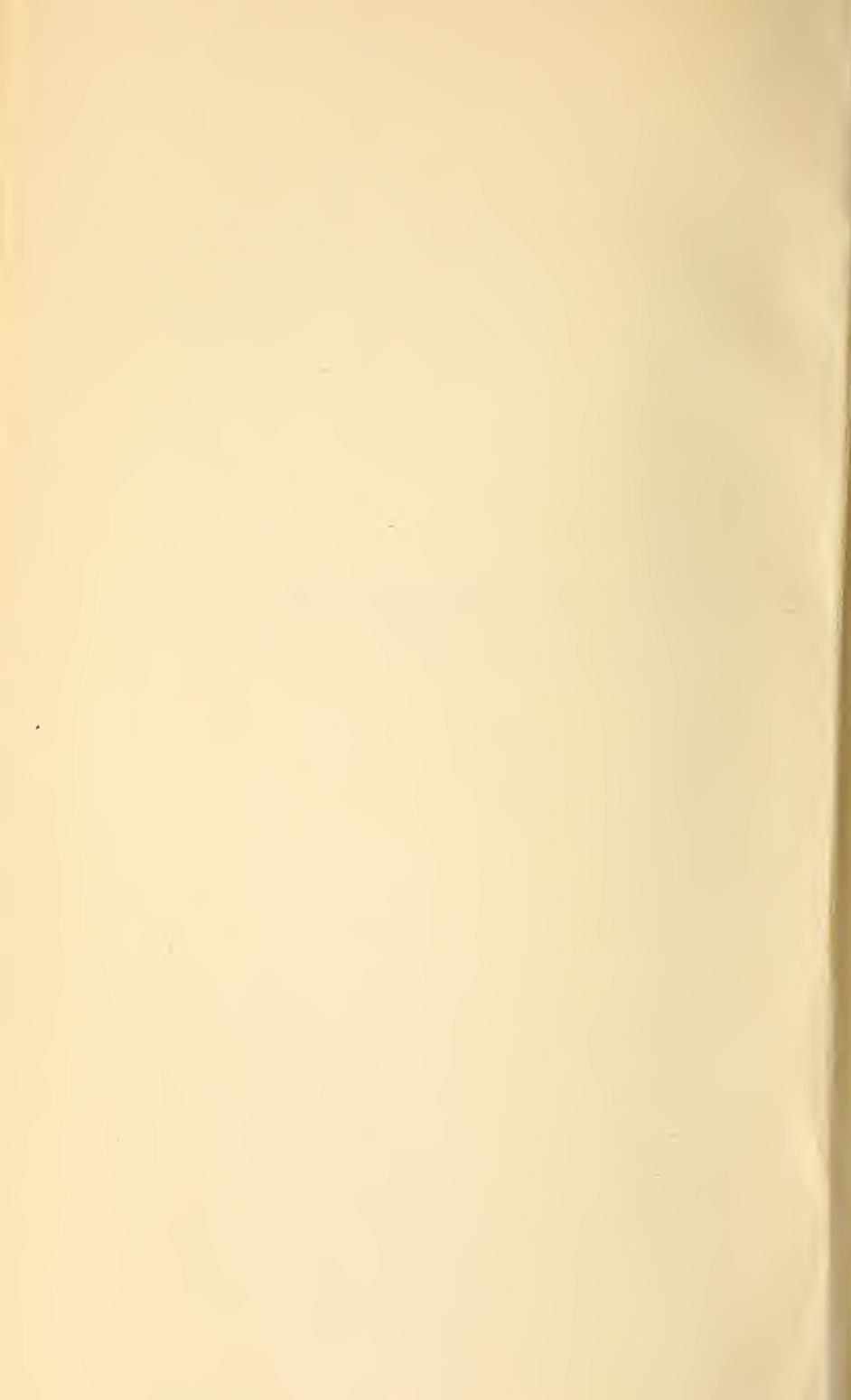


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TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE
IN MANY LANDS





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THE AUTHOR

TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE IN MANY LANDS

BY
CECIL GOSLING

FORMERLY HIS MAJESTY'S ENVOY EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY
TO THE REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA.

WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS BY
MAXIMILIAN VON POOSCH



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THIS BOOK IS
DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY
OF MY
THREE GALLANT SONS

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**TRAVEL AND ADVENTURE
IN MANY LANDS**

TRAVEL & ADVENTURE IN MANY LANDS

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

THIS is the tale of the wanderings in many lands of a minor official in the employment of the Foreign Office, and as my travels really started almost from the cradle, it is, perhaps, not out of place for me to begin with some account of my childhood.

My father, the late Sir Audley Gosling, K.C.M.G., who belonged to an old English family of French origin, started life as an ensign in the Welsh Fusiliers, until a chance visit to Sweden in the 'fifties of the last century had the effect of changing his whole career; for while on this visit he met my mother, who was the daughter of Count Gyldenstolpe, Chamberlain to Charles IX of Sweden, and became engaged to her. Her parents, however, did not approve of their daughter marrying a penniless "sub" in a marching regiment, and the engagement was made conditional on his entering the Diplomatic Service.

So my father hurried off to interview the Foreign Office authorities, and having obtained a nomination from Lord Malmesbury, the then Foreign Secretary, succeeded in passing the simple examination which in those days was required of budding diplomatists. He was then appointed to Stockholm, and here I was born.

My father was the youngest son of Captain George Gosling, R.N., a Knight of Hanover and a distinguished officer of the Nelson period. Among interesting family connexions are James Brooke, the first Rajah of Sarawak; Evelyn, the author of the well-known "Diary"; and Jack Mytton, the famous hunting man.

My mother was a member of an old Swedish family, her mother being Countess Fersen, a grand-niece of Axel von Fersen, the brave and chivalrous friend of Marie Antoinette.

My father was later sent to Athens, then to Madrid, and thence he was transferred to Copenhagen. I was then about six years old, and can remember a comfortable old country house near the

Charlottenburg woods and facing the bluish-green waters of the Sound.

My father, from early life a great lover of the sea, was the first to introduce yacht-racing in Sweden, and subsequently in Denmark. A score or more of valuable prizes, now in my possession, attest his prowess at the helm, and his services to yachting in their waters were recognized by his being made an honorary life member of the principal nautical clubs of Scandinavia. He was also a keen and skilful fly-fisherman, and we boys were familiar with these two fine sports from boyhood upwards.

After two years my father was moved to Stuttgart, and shortly after it was decided to send my elder brother to a well-known boarding school not far from this town. As even in those early days I had a strong desire to see the world, I begged my parents to allow me to accompany him. Eventually, after much pleading, my wishes were granted, and I proceeded to Kornthal, as the school was called. I was then nine years old.

Kornthal, which was situated in the valley of the Neckar, close to the small town of Kannstadt, was one of the schools of the religious Order known as the Moravian Brothers. The majority of the boys were Germans, but there were a few English and Americans as well. Algernon Blackwood, the well-known writer, was, I believe, at one time a pupil there, and one of his occult stories has Kornthal as a setting.

It was a place of iron discipline and Spartan habits, and after I had been there a few days I began to wonder why I had been in such a hurry to leave the comforts of my home. Though I have no recollection of being myself flogged—perhaps my extreme youth saved me—I can well remember seeing other boys unmercifully beaten and even kicked by the form masters. Such a belabouring fell one day to the share of an American boy called Harris, who was in my form, and to escape the punishment he jumped clean out of the window, and was so seriously injured that he had to be removed from the school. There was another kind of punishment which was almost as bad as flogging, and of which I frequently got a taste. The first lesson missed in the morning, the master pronounced the ominous words: "*Kein fleisch*" ("No meat"), and if one missed another he added: "*Kein gemüse*" ("No vegetables"), which meant that one's dinner was reduced to a slice of black bread and water. As one went into the refectory for meals a master stood in the doorway armed with a cane, and in passing one had to hold out one's hands for inspection. Should they be unwashed or even inky, woe betide the hungry boy, for a shower of blows was all he got in place of his dinner.

The bathing arrangements were simple. In summer we bathed every day in the Neckar, and as I was already a good swimmer for my years I have a pleasant recollection of these occasions.

In winter, however, it was a different matter, for every Saturday, often when the thermometer stood at fifteen or sixteen degrees of frost, we were lined up in the courtyard in military formation, a master facing us with a hosepipe. Then, by word of command, we stepped in twos from the ranks and were well soused, fore and aft, with the jet of icy water. The last boy standing shivering in the cold till his turn came had a pretty thin time ; and, being the smallest in the school, I was generally that last boy.

There were no games of any kind at Kornthal, and for exercise we were either taken long route-marches in military formation, and in charge of one of the masters, or drilled in the courtyard. These were our only relaxations, and for the rest of the day we were kept busily at work.

In spite, however, of the monotony of the life and the Spartan discipline, which was in keeping with Germany of the 'seventies, my recollections of the school were not unpleasant ones, and the hardening process which we underwent there was no doubt an excellent preparation for the rough school of life itself.

In 1880 my father was transferred from Stuttgart to Budapest, and when the Christmas holidays approached my brother and I received the welcome news that we were to join our family in the Hungarian capital.

Shortly after our arrival at Budapest my brother's health gave cause for alarm, and as it was thought that the roughing which he had endured at school, and the lack of nourishing food, was to some extent responsible for this, it was presently decided that we were not to return to Kornthal.

I can remember that I was by no means pleased at this decision, as, even at this early age, I liked the independence from the family roof which school life gives, and my doubts were presently confirmed when the English tutor, whom my father engaged, arrived to take up his duties.

Boys of to-day certainly have one great advantage of those in my time, in that their teachers are educated men specially trained for the purpose. In my day any fool was deemed good enough to teach, and in my case the result was utter confusion of mind and body. I hated my lessons, which were taught in a most unintelligent and unsympathetic manner, to such an extent that I decided to run away to sea, and having packed some clothes and bread in a handkerchief set forth on my journey. But it is a good long way to the sea from Pest, and I had not gone far on my

road when I was overtaken by a cart in which sat my hated tutor. Into this I was quickly hustled and driven home to a father with a birch in his hands, and a mother in tears.

After this sad ending to my adventure, I had perforce to make the best of things and put up with my tutor and his methods, distasteful though they were.

The winters in Pest were very severe and enabled me to acquire the art of skating. In the summer we went to a place called Füred on Lake Balaton, which had not in these days become fashionable. Here my father introduced yacht-sailing and racing to the Hungarians, who adopted the new sport eagerly, and we children enjoyed ourselves in our own way with fishing and boating.

After my elder brother's death, which occurred at this time, my father was anxious to leave Hungary.

Subsequent to a stay of some months in England he was appointed first secretary to Copenhagen, and we were all glad to return to that pleasant city with its memories of early childhood.

Our minister in Copenhagen at that time was the late Lord Vivian, who, happily for me, was a great riding and hunting man, and as he kept a pony for his own small boy I was sometimes allowed to share it with him. I also had another method of getting rides, for my sisters were now "out" and, being extremely handsome girls, did not lack admirers. Some of these were young cavalry officers, and by dint of a certain diplomacy and much pertinacity I was often successful in getting a mount in the riding school at the barracks. Those were happy moments, the recollection of which is still vivid in my memory.

Fishing was another sport which had an irresistible attraction for me from early childhood upwards. Just outside the town an old moat encircled the weather-beaten forts facing the sea, and its green stagnant waters were plentifully stocked with pike, perch, and bream of great size. It was a Crown domain and fishing was strictly forbidden, but nevertheless my second brother and I managed to evade the law, and were sometimes successful in making a good haul. But it was exciting work, for keepers were always on the look out, and it was by no means easy to escape their vigilance. My plan was to carry a short rod in two joints down the leg of my trousers, and the moment I was free from observation to start operations. Fortunately the fish were both tame and very greedy, being quite unused to anyone fishing for them.

Since leaving Pest my first tutor had been replaced by another who was not only a good fellow, but a good teacher as well.

Though happy enough at home, I was very anxious to go to

school in England, and after much begging on my part, and, I fear, not a little intentional naughtiness, my father at length consented to the taking of this step, and my name was put down for Bath College, one of the many new public schools which were springing up all over England at that time.

It was a school which had acquired considerable reputation both for scholarship and sport, and its destinies were then presided over by an eccentric, but in many respects remarkable, man, by name Thomas Dunn. During the period of Dunn's head mastership the Bath College prospered greatly, but with his retirement, some fifteen years ago or more, it fell on bad times, and has now ceased to exist.

Of my school days I have not much to say, because they were quite uneventful.

At my father's wish I was placed on the modern side, and after a cursory examination, in which I was assisted by my knowledge of French and German, I entered the lower fifth form, being the youngest boy in the class. The modern side at the public schools was, in the 'eighties, a comparatively recent innovation, and certainly as far as Bath College was concerned not a very successful one. The masters, both from a point of view of social standing and ability, were decidedly inferior to their colleagues on the classical side, and the same may be said of the boys themselves. Even as regards games the modern side boys were in a position of inferiority, for the classical masters were all university men, most of whom had distinguished themselves during their college career at various branches of sport, and they naturally encouraged and coached their own pupils in preference to those of the modern side. Strangely enough, too, the classical boys invariably topped the lists in modern languages, and in my last year I was first beaten for the prizes for German and French prose by H. J. Edwards, the head of the school, who afterwards had a distinguished career at Cambridge.

The head master, Mr. Dunn—or "Teddy" as we called him—was an eccentric and picturesque character. In appearance he was tall and ascetic, with long dark hair, flecked with silver, falling on his shoulders. He wore a full moustache and a sparse beard, which he had never shaved, and which gave him something of the appearance of a mediaeval saint. A great classical scholar himself, he was quick to discern ability in his pupils, over whom he exercised a powerful influence. We of the modern side seldom came into contact with the head master, except on those dread occasions when haled before him for condign punishment. I was twice flogged by the old man, and found, in spite of his fragile appearance, that he had a stout arm and could hit hard.

My father being transferred from Copenhagen to Madrid in the summer of 1886, I went to spend my holidays with my family at the Escorial, where they were then living.

To arrive in Spain was, for me, to fall at once under its charm. The blue sky, the pleasant, dignified people, and the atmosphere pervading everything attracted me irresistibly, as was but natural at my impressionable age, for I was just turned sixteen. Making friends with a gay band of students of the university, these youths—many of whom were of the same age as myself, but looked, of course, years older—taught me not only to converse in Spanish, but to frequent the bull-ring, the cock-pit, and even to join in an evening serenade under the windows of some dark-eyed beauty of this ancient and historic town. It was all very delightful, and school seemed very prosaic when I returned after the close of the holidays. But I had some compensation, for my father wrote to the head master requesting that I might be allowed to keep up the Spanish that I had acquired. This proved an agreeable relaxation, and every afternoon I was allowed to spend a couple of hours in the old man's study poring over "*Don Quixote*," which, aided by a dictionary, I read in the original. The head master, who was usually present on these occasions, showed not a little interest in my studies, and would make me construe him portions of my reading. He, of course, knew no Spanish, but his knowledge of Latin gave him a considerable hold on the language, and he could roughly guess the meaning of a difficult phrase, so that between us we were able to work out a fairly accurate translation. This daily contact with the old scholar was of no small benefit to me intellectually, and perhaps supplied a little of the polish which I had missed through being on the modern side at school.

Sometimes Cervantes was laid aside and my head master would tell of Spain's early history, passing thence to the glories of ancient Rome and Greece. On these occasions he would stand up and declaim as if addressing favourite boys of the sixth form, waving, gesticulating, and spluttering as was his wont. At other times he would give utterance to some of his peculiar fads, which were often laughable enough. "*Laddie*," he would say, "never use a razor, but let the hair grow on your face as nature intended it should." This advice was happily not followed by the elder boys of Bath College, or they would have looked pretty sights; and as far as it concerned myself, my face was then and remained for several years to come as innocent of beard and moustache as that of a new-born baby.

Dunn had another odd prejudice in his dislike of the writings of Dickens, which he declared were vulgar. This impressed me

so much that I was well into the 'forties before I read a line of the immortal author of "Pickwick," and then hastened to make up for lost time.

In my last year at school I got into the lower sixth form, and here Dunn would sometimes—to the great distress of my ears—take the French class. His pronunciation of the language was too appalling for words, but blindly confident in himself, and the results of a few weeks' stay in France, the head master was quite certain that he was right, and I, who had spoken French since early childhood, was forced, under threats of dire penalties, to adapt my accent in accordance with that of my preceptor. It was a regular farce, and I hope that foreign languages are better taught in schools to-day than they were in my time.

CHAPTER II

BULL-FIGHTING

I LEFT school for good when I was seventeen and rejoined my family in Madrid, with the object of thoroughly acquiring the Spanish language. In this I was not unsuccessful, and my studies brought me into contact with people of various sorts and conditions, amongst whom were what is known in Spain as the *afición*, a word difficult to translate but which means, roughly, the bull-fighters and those who are closely interested in the bull-ring.

Those were the great days of bull-fighting in Spain, when the ablest and most classical masters of the art held their sway, and I must plead guilty to have fallen under the glamour of their personalities. I hated the cruelty of it, but the sight of a man standing up single-handed to one of the most savage beasts on earth—a Spanish fighting bull—fascinated me, and I shared with the Spaniards their admiration for the national heroes of the ring. At the time, when these lines are being written, bull-fighting is said to be on the wane in Spain. The efforts of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals are beginning to be felt, and before long the *corrida* will, no doubt, become a thing of the past.

It may be, therefore, not without interest if I give some account of the national sport of Spain as I saw it in those days, for, unlike the great majority of foreigners who patronize the ring, I really knew something of the complicated technique of the business, and I have seen Lagartijo, Frascuelo, Mazantini, and Guerrita kill bulls. Boca Negra, a less fashionable but still a stout fighter, was my particular friend, and gave me his *muleta*, a gift which is counted as a high honour among the fraternity. So great was my enthusiasm that, during the less important fights called *novilladas*, when there usually is, at the end, a bull for the amateurs, I used to go into the ring myself. On these occasions the horns of the animal are tipped with stout leather buffers, so that the danger is not really very great. Nevertheless, what I saw in the arena increased my respect for the professionals, for the little *novillo* seemed to my excited imagination a very monster of a bull when he charged, and by dropping a handkerchief one had just time to get safely over the barrier to avoid a tossing. Then, with heart thumping loudly, one had a vivid realization of what it must be like to be up against the real thing.

Bull-fighting was probably originally introduced into Spain by the Moors, and has been developed by the Spaniards to its present state. From periods as early as the eleventh or twelfth century records are in existence of these combats and of the names of the noblemen who took part in them. In the early times there were no professional fighters, just as in the case of knightly tourneys; only the nobility and pretenders to nobility took part. Professional fighters commenced at the end of the sixteenth century, and the records of the Tauromachic Society in Madrid have a complete list of the names of these men and of their performances, as well as, in many cases, the characteristics of the more notable bulls which they fought and by which, in not a few cases, they were killed. Bull-fighters do not, as a rule, make old bones, and if they remain in the ring too long, after their wonderful nerve has begun to fail them, they are pretty sure to be either badly caught or killed. This is shown in Blasco Ibañez' masterpiece, "*Sangre y arena*" ("Blood and Sand"), which depicts, with a perfect fidelity to facts, the life of a fashionable bull-fighter.

The professional bull-fighters belong, as a rule, in Spain to that class of people known as *majos*, whose origin is not altogether easy to discover. It is certain, however, that the *majos* have more than a trace of gipsy blood—many bull-fighters have been pure gipsies—and that the dialect which they speak amongst themselves is a mixture of *Gitano* and Spanish. They wear the Spanish national costume—a short coat cut like an Eton jacket, a superfine, white frilled shirt with a small round collar, a narrow red tie and tight-fitting trousers. At a time when nearly all men wore the moustache, bull-fighters, in company with Catholic priests, remained clean-shaven. Their women, known as *majas*, are usually good-looking, and dress in the national garb—a tight-fitting velvet bodice, over which they wear a handsome fringed Manila shawl, a short full skirt, silk stockings, and smart shoes. They wear the black mantilla for everyday use, and on official occasions, for a *corrida*, the white mantilla.

The young would-be bull-fighter first begins to get practice at the *corridas*, where an amateur bull, with the points of his horns covered, is loosed in the ring, and in the smaller villages where a yearling bull is often played and killed by the *aficionados*. He may then become a member of a country *cuadrilla* (troupe) as a *capa* (cloakman). In my time in Spain there was a bull-fighting college in Seville, which, under the direction of a retired *maestro*, made a business of training the youthful talent of the profession.

If, after this preliminary training, the youthful *majo* has

shown courage, skill, and grace—the Spaniards lay great score by their word *gracia* in all aspects of life—if again he is *simpatico* and pleases the public, he may be promoted to become a *capa* (cloakman) at some first-rate *cuadrilla*, appearing in some famous rings, such as those of Madrid, Seville, and Cordova. He then grows his *coleta*, a single plait of hair at the back of his head about three inches long, which, when he afterwards retires from the ring, he cuts off.

The *cuadrilla* is composed of its leader, the *espada*, or bull-killer, who has under him the following: a second *espada*—a coming man who has not yet fully attained his laurels—four *banderilleros*, and about the same number of *picadores*, or pikemen, mounted on horses. The *espada* also has with him his valet, who dresses him and hands him his sword in the last act of the fight. In the first stage of the fight the footmen, including the *espada*, carry a large cloak, generally claret-coloured, which is held in front of the charging bull, the operator neatly stepping aside as he does so, for in the bull-ring, as in boxing, footwork counts for a great deal. If a *picador* is unhorsed, or, as is often the case, lies under his fallen horse, it is the duty of the *capeador* to draw away the bull with his cloak to enable the man to get up, or, if injured, to be carried away by the attendants, called *mono sabios*. The business of the cloak is the first step in the bull-ring, and the *capeador* wields it with extraordinary grace and dexterity which it is difficult to describe and which must be seen to be understood. The cloak itself is stiffened with glue and when shaken makes a crackling noise which keeps the bull at bay and prevents him getting too close to the man behind it. Having acquired proficiency in this branch of his trade the *aspirante* now attempts the more difficult business of the *banderillero*. The *banderillas* are stout sticks about a foot and a half long, covered with tinsel paper and having at the end a small iron barb, like a miniature harpoon head. Their use will be shown when I come to describe the actual fight.

The *picador*, or mounted pike-man, is a man apart in the profession, for, with but rare exceptions, he remains what he is and does not attempt any other branches of the ring. He is dressed in a short jacket with a crimson sash round his waist. His overalls are of yellow deer-skin, and his right leg is protected by an iron shield not unlike a cricket pad. Big spurs and a broad-brimmed hat complete his costume. The *espada*, as already stated, is the head of the *cuadrilla*, and is responsible for its direction. In the great fights after Easter he is usually accompanied by a young *torero* who is beginning to achieve fame, and who takes what is known as the *alternativo*, killing one or more

bulls after the performance of the *maestro*. He is, in fact, a *banderillero* learning to become an *espada*, or bull-killer.

The dress of the *majo* has already been described. It is also the undress, or mufti, of the professional bull-fighter, for in the ring he wears a more handsome and effective costume, consisting of a short silk coat richly covered with gold and silver embroidery, and even, in the case of very great masters of the ring, sewn with pearls and other precious stones. His breeches and stockings are also of silk, and he is shod with light pumps. Round the waist he wears the crimson *faja*, or waistband, and on his head the black three-cornered *montero*. The *banderilleros* and *capeadores* wear a similar dress, but less ornate and expensive.

And now, having tried to describe the persons of the ring, I am going to say something about the chief actor on the stage, namely, the bull. Fighting bulls in Spain are bred expressly for the purpose, and great care is taken to produce in the animals the qualities desired, which are firstly ferocity, and secondly activity and powers of resistance. Their horns must be sloped so that in the event of a man being caught—a *cojida* as is said in Spain—he cannot get in between the horns. They must be short and black, sloped so as to receive him first on their points. The bull's courage is, of course, an essential point; he must go for his man, firstly from the point of view of the public, and secondly that of the *torero*, who likes, above all, what he calls *un toro franco*—a frank bull, one which charges freely. He hates and fears a cowardly animal, which is what he calls *pegajoso* (sticky)—one who hesitates and paws the ground, because with such a bull the fighter loses contact and does not know what the animal is going to do next. These are the dangerous ones and the cause of many accidents in the ring. I have heard bull-fighters describe a really savage animal as *una mantequilla* (a piece of butter)—one with which they can do what they like, because they know that he will always charge.

In appearance the Spanish bull is very handsome, usually dark-coloured, and built for activity combined with strength. He recalls the classical representations of *taurus*, and is, of course, as unlike our stabled, artificially fed prize animal as it is possible to be. None the less, it was said in Madrid, at the time of which I write, that a Scotchman, interested in bull-fighting, had sent over four Scotch bulls, which appeared in the ring and completely nonplussed the *toreros*. They behaved altogether unlike Spanish bulls, and instead of charging the cloaks attacked the man, and after wounding several of them cleared the arena and were taken out triumphant.

The Spanish bull is bred on the plains of Castile and Andalusia,

and, at the time of which I write, from the day of his birth to the age of two years he hardly ever saw a man or a horse, for he did not run with other cattle. Under modern conditions, with motors and foreign excursionists dashing about the country roads, his solitude is no doubt less complete, and his unique fighting qualities are, I understand, deteriorated.

When he is approaching his second year he is tested for the ring in the following manner : The owners of the *hacienda*, or ranch, together with their friends and generally some *toreros*, ride out to where the young cattle are. It is a picturesque sight, for, sitting straight in their high-peaked Moorish saddles, they are riding their handsome, spirited Andalusian horses whose long, silky manes and tails sweep the ground. They wear the *majo* costume and the long, heavily rowelled spurs, which we English associate with the period of Charles I, but which are still in use in South America and Spain—unchanging Spain ! After riding across the brown plains, the wonderful blue sky overhead, they come across a mob of young cattle. The men who are going to test these bulls—usually only two or three among the party—are armed with stout lances with iron points about an inch or so in length. Riding out from the party, and selecting a likely animal, one of the men incites the bull to charge, which the animal usually does willingly enough and receives the point in the thick, fleshy part of the neck—the hump of the bull. If the animal charges a second time, he is marked down as first class ; if he refuses to charge at all, he is noted as useless for the ring and is brought in for castration. Not infrequently, in the case of a fierce young bull, accidents occur, and horse and rider may be severely gored or even killed.

After this *ensayo*, or test, the selected bulls are left to the enjoyment of their liberty, until nearing the fourth year, when they are brought up for a *corrida*. They are now big, imposing animals with a ferocious eye and a form combining great symmetry and strength.

Their next appearance is in the arena.

CHAPTER III

A CORRIDA

THE bulls are driven by men on horseback armed with lances into the town, and are accompanied by tame oxen with bells tied round their necks, both to warn the passers-by to get out of the way and to keep the fighting animals quiet.

They usually time their travelling to arrive at about midnight in the town where the fight is to be held. On arrival at the *plaza de toros*, which is commonly situated on the outskirts of the town, a number of the *afición*, or amateurs, are assembled to see them placed in their separate compartments, where they are left for the night.

There is a little chapel near the bull-ring in Madrid dedicated to the patron saint of the bull-fighters, and on the morning of the *corrida*, a Sunday or Church Festival, the men who are to appear in the ring bend the knee before the altar and ask for protection in the coming fight.

From an early hour all Madrid is astir with excitement ; the town is placarded with bills of the *corrida*, giving the names of the famous *maestros* and their *cuadrillas* engaged, and a full description of the bulls to be killed, usually four to six, and on very grand occasions eight. On all sides vendors are offering tickets for the ring. At two o'clock a vast concourse is streaming out to the *plaza*, carriages with fines ladies in white mantillas, members of the aristocracy of old Spain, cabs filled with enthusiastic *aficionados*, many foreigners, and finally a gaily dressed crowd of pedestrians, the people of Spain. Through the crowd, two or more carriages drawn by four fast horses and containing the gaily dressed *toreros* flash by, and a way is opened for them as if they were Royalty.

The Spanish bull-ring is a circular building with the arena and tiers of seats above. It has only two divisions, the sun and the shade, the former the cheap and the latter the expensive seats, but graded according to their proximity to the arena, which is where the most enthusiastic amateurs congregate. Above are the boxes and seats going up to the top of the building. There is a circular passage between the two barriers separating the arena from the public, and in this passage the bull-fighters who are not engaged, stand watching the fight and awaiting their duties. In the centre of the amphitheatre is the main entrance to the ring, whence emerge the *toreros* and the bulls, and opposite

this, in a box, are seated the president of the arena, with an *asesor* or adviser seated on either side of him. The function of this president is to start the *corrida*, which he does by the display of a white handkerchief, on seeing which a trumpeter, stationed opposite, over the *torril*, or portion of the buildings where the bulls are enclosed, blows a shrill note for the opening of the performance. In the same manner it is for the president to decide when the play with the cloak, or *capa*, is to be succeeded by the *picadores* (pike-men); when the *banderilleros* assume their rôle; and, finally, when the *espada* is to play his part for the death scene.

The president has also to decide if a cowardly bull which declines to fight is to be removed from the arena, or whether *banderillas de fuego*—darts to which fire crackers are attached and which goad the animal to greater ferocity—are to be used.

The arena itself is circular in form, and lightly strewn with sand in order to give a good foothold for man and beast. At four points of the barrier, which is fully six feet high there are apertures between the boards, which give a refuge to the *torero* if pursued very closely by the bull; these are called *burladeros* in Spanish, and the *torero* must be careful not to use them too often or he will make the public his enemy.

Everything being now ready, the sign is given, and as the clear notes of the trumpet cease, the barrier behind the *torril* opens and the bull-fighters who are to perform enter.

The *espada* of each *cuadrilla* leads the procession; behind him follow the *banderilleros*, and last the *picadores*, on poor broken-down nags, their right eyes bandaged so that they should not see the bull charge. Lightly cast over their shoulders they wear gaily coloured cloaks, and they walk with the dignity of their race and with the inimitable grace and swagger of their class. Advancing to the centre of the ring they salute the president, and, divesting themselves of their cloaks, they fling these with a graceful gesture, perhaps to a white mantilla in her box, or to some *aficionado* and patron seated near the barrier. This is counted as a high honour for the recipient, and the cloak is spread out over the front of the box or barrier. The members of the *cuadrilla* which is about to fight now take their stand in the arena, and the other competitors go between the barriers as spectators to await their turn. The scene is a remarkable one, and unique in modern times. It is the very tradition of Spain's ancient and glorious history, and its cruelty can only be excused by the grace and daring of the performers. For of all sports this is the most dangerous, to face—on foot and unarmed, except in the case of the *espada*—the most powerful and savage animal on

earth, who will shortly be goaded into a state of ferocity exceeding belief.

A horseman now enters, beautifully mounted and clad in velvet, a cavalier hat with plumes, high boots, and silver spurs. Advancing to the presidential box, the *alguacil* makes a sweeping bow and receives in his hat the key of the *torril*, which is thrown to him by the president. The clarion sounds again, and the gates of the *torril*, on which all eyes are fixed, slowly open.

A bull emerges from the darkness along the passage leading to the ring, slowly at first, but, as he nears the exit, a bunch of gay ribbons attached to a barb are lightly planted in his massive neck. Enraged by the prick, he dashes into the ring, his little red eyes blinking in the sunlight. He sees a horse, and a man on it raising his lance to attract his attention; he charges, hurling all his mass of weight at the enemy, the *picador* receiving him on the point of his lance. A *capeador* deftly distracts his attention, by dangling his long cloak with a graceful movement, and leads him away. The bull charges furiously with eyes shut, but meets only the cloak, for the man has nimbly stepped aside. He charges another horse, but is again held by the lance; another and another with the same result. But now the people seated on the sunny side are raising a cry, undetermined at first but swelling into unanimity: "*Sangre! Sangre!*" they roar ("Blood! Blood!"); and the bull, again incited by the raised arm and lance of the *picador*, charges once more. This time the horse's flanks are undefended: the horns enter deep, and over go man and horse to the ground. The bull turns to the recumbent form of the rider, but cannot, owing to his position, bring his horns to bear; in a moment, before the *capeador* can reach him, he has stamped with his forefoot, crushing the man's head as if it were a walnut shell. Two *capeadors* entice the bull to the other side of the ring, while *monos sabios* hurry to the motionless rider under the horse. Both are dead. They pull the horse away, and carry off the gaily dressed body, for his last fight is done.

A thrill runs through the mass of spectators round the great amphitheatre. Silence reigns for a moment and is then broken by cries of "*Viva olé por el toro*," for the bull has shown himself fierce beyond expectation. "*Sangre! Sangre!*" cry the *pueblo* again, and, as if in answer to their shout, the bull charges horse after horse, plunging his sharp horns into their defenceless sides and leaving their entrails exposed. Seven horses lie dead or wounded, and the dead are the fortunate ones, for the wounded are taken out and sewn up to await another foe. This is the deadly blot, the horrible cruelty of the whole proceeding, and nothing can excuse it.

Again the notes of the trumpet are heard, and the *picadores* yet in the saddle leave the ring, while the cloakmen play the bull at the opposite end to keep his attention engaged.

The *banderillero* now advances, and holding his darts with shortened arms he, in his turn, incites the bull, which, seeing a new and apparently less formidable enemy, charges headlong. When he is at arm's length the *banderillero* neatly fixes each of his darts *over* his horns into his neck, one on each side of the hump, and as he does so steps nimbly aside, avoiding the menacing horns by an inch or two. Other *banderilleros* follow him until three or four pairs of the darts hang down on either side of the bull's massive neck. The *maestro* has all this time been carefully watching the animal against whose strength he is to pit his skill, and has noted its every movement and peculiarity. He now advances, holding in his hands two *banderillas* half the length of the ones already used and covered with silk instead of paper; these are called *banderillas de lujo*, and to please some white mantilla in the box above, or a powerful patron in the barrier seats, he is going to give the public a foretaste of his daring.

A chair is brought and placed in the centre of the ring, and in this, after flicking the dust lackadaisically with his lace-embroidered handkerchief, he seats himself. A *capeador*, with a deft twirl of his cloak, brings the bull on a line with the seated figure, catching sight of which it charges headlong. It looks as if escape for the man were impossible, but with incredible rapidity he steps to one side, and neatly affixes the *banderillas*. Crash! The chair is flung angrily aloft by the horns of the infuriated animal. The vast amphitheatre rings with the cheers of the excited spectators, while flowers, cigars, coins, and hats are thrown into the ring amid wild enthusiasm. The master calmly bows his acknowledgments, while his attendant picks up the offerings and throws the hats back to their owners.

Now the trumpet sounds the death-note, and the final act is at hand. The *espada* has gone between the barrier, where his valet has unsheathed his sword, which, after carefully wiping, he hands to his master. The sword is a narrow, triangular piece of fine Toledo steel, with a small handle which fits closely to the hand. In his left hand the *espada* carries a red cloth fixed to a short stick but a few inches long. This cloth is the *muleta*, which is used for playing the bull and for getting him in proper position with his head down, ready for the death stroke.

The bull is now engaged by the *capeadores* at the far end of the ring, and the *espada*, walking up to the presidential box, says, in Spanish, words to this effect: "Mr. President, I dedicate this

bull to Your Worship, and will kill it for the glory of Spain. *Viva España!*" Bowing, he turns, divests himself of his gala cloak, which he alone of the *cuadrilla* has retained, and throws it up to the lady of his predilection—perhaps his wife, who may be an interested and anxious spectator. His *montero*, or three-cornered hat, he sends with a dexterous fling behind his back into the box or seat of another admirer, and then turns to face the bull. If he be one of the great *maestros*, such as were, in my time, Lagartijo, Frascuelo, Mazantini, Guerrita, and others, he will then say to the members of his *cuadrilla* who are in the ring: "*Fuera gente*," a signal to them to leave the arena. He is then left alone with the animal which he means to kill, but which is equally intent on killing the man if it gets a chance. For, though the great physical strain of the fight has reduced the bull's activity, he is mad with anger, and if possible more dangerous than before. He is beginning to disregard the cloak and to get nearer the man behind it with every fresh charge he makes. No *espada*, however skilful, can cope with a bull fresh in the ring and kill him according to the fixed and immutable laws governing bull-fighting in Spain. According to these only one stroke is permitted, by which the sword must enter the neck *over* the horns, at the spot where the spinal column meets it. In order to make this stroke, the arm is fully extended, and when the sword has struck home the man wielding it will be but a few inches off the bull's horns. Should the weapon slip and not strike home, unless the *espada* can make a marvellously quick recovery, the bull will inevitably get the upper hand, and, if man and beast be near the barrier, will gore him against the boards; if in the centre of the ring the bull will toss his victim high into the air, to receive him on his sharp horns as he comes down. Such a *cojida* usually means death to the man concerned.

The *espada* has now engaged his bull, who repeatedly charges the *muleta*, which is wielded so dexterously over the animal's horns, from left to right and from right to left, that it is almost as if a fisherman were playing a monster fish at the end of a rod and line. At times the animal stops and paws the ground, and the man loses contact for a moment. This is the moment of the greatest danger. A quick double charge and the *espada*—if off his guard—is nearly caught, the sharp horns ripping and tearing the man's jacket. The public is thrilled, and the sharp intake of breath of thousands is distinctly audible. The *espada*, to show his coolness, takes his lace handkerchief from his pocket and, leaning forward, wipes the foam from the panting animal's nose. This is a *gracia* which goes straight to the heart of the public; cries of "*Viva!*" and "*Olé!*" are heard from all sides, and a

voice from the sunny side, audible above the others, shouts : " *Benditas sean las tripas de tu madre !* " (" Blessed be the bowels of your mother ! ").

More passes with the *muleta*, and the *espada* has manœuvred his victim into position. The bull stands, still full of life, menacing with head down, about to charge. At this moment the figure of the man stiffens to a pose of inflexible resolution. Sword in hand and arm extended to its full length he rushes at his adversary, and plunges his weapon to the hilt in the neck at the spot where it joins the spinal column. The bull immediately collapses on to his knees, and a *banderillero* leaps over the barrier and, with a short knife, piths it behind the skull, and it rolls over dead.

The frenzied ranks of the spectators stand up ; a roar of applause shakes the building, and cigars, money, hats are thrown to the triumphant *espada*, who bows in acknowledgment. His cloak and *montero* are thrown back to him from the seats above, and a gaily caparisoned team of mules enters to drag off the dead bodies of the bull and horses, while the spectators, their calm now restored, settle down in their seats to await the next event.

Such was the Spanish bull-fight of thirty years ago : a cruel sport, and one only redeemed by the skill and bravery of the performers engaged in it.

Before many years it will, no doubt, disappear from Spain as it has vanished from many of the South American republics, where it is forbidden by law. But, for my part, I must confess that I am glad to have seen a *gran corrida* in those days when bull-fighting was at its best.

Shortly before I left Madrid, Lagartijo, the great *espada*, had the misfortune to lose his wife, who was reputed to be the handsomest woman in Castile, and to whom he was known to be wholly devoted.

On the following Sunday Lagartijo appeared in the ring, he and every man of his *cuadrilla* dressed in black, and acquitted himself so valiantly that the people of Madrid loved him even more than before.

A *majo* wrote the following verses for the occasion, to the music of the guitar. They were sung all through Spain wherever the *afición* congregated :

*El día de San Antonio,
El día de San Antonio,
Es lo que hubo que ver ;
Del entierro que le hizo
Lagartijo a su mujer.*

*Hoy no viene mi chiquita bonita ;
Hoy no viene mi tesoro de oro ;*

*Hoy no viene quien me llore,
Cuando voy a matar toro.*

*Hoy no viene tu chiquita bonita ;
Hoy no viene tu tesoro de oro ;
Hoy no viene quien te llore
Cuando vas a matar toro.*

TRANSLATION

On the day of Saint Anthony,
On the day of Saint Anthony,
You should have seen
What a funeral Lagartijo
Gave to his wife.

My darling girl is not here to-day ;
My treasure of gold does not come ;
There is no one who will weep for me
When I go to kill the bull.

Your darling girl does not come to-day ;
Your treasure of gold is not here ;
There is no one who will weep for you
When you go to kill the bull.

This is doggerel which does not bear translation, but it is very Spanish.

CHAPTER IV

RUSSIAN EPISODES

HAVING reached the age of seventeen it was high time that some decision should be arrived at as to my future profession. My only wish was to be a soldier, but unfortunately my father, though he had not himself made up his mind what was to become of me, was opposed to my embracing a military career, and, like Mr. Micawber, was waiting for something to turn up.

In 1888 he was appointed counsellor to the Embassy in St. Petersburg, and decided that I was to accompany him thither for the purpose of studying the Russian language, which he considered would be useful to me in after life.

So, after some months spent in the country in England, where I had my first taste in pheasant and rabbit shooting, I followed my family to the Russian capital, where I spent the remainder of the winter and was engaged in studying the language and making my début in society.

When the spring came my father decided that I should go and live with a Russian family in the country, and I accordingly set off for my new destination, which was a small village called Mejño, about two hours by train from St. Petersburg.

The family consisted of a retired clerk who had been employed in the Ministry of the Interior—a wizened little man of about fifty, dressed in seedy black—his wife and two children, a rather good-looking girl of my own age, and a boy a couple of years younger.

The retired Government clerk owned a small house and grounds in the village itself, and here eked out his scanty pension. Neither he nor his family spoke one single word of any language other than their own, and as my knowledge of Russian at the time of my arrival among them was of the scantiest description, the position was scarcely a happy one for any of us. However, I set to with a will, and by dint of hard work succeeded in acquiring within a few weeks some knowledge of the grammar, and a fair vocabulary which enabled me to converse, very haltingly at first, with my hosts. The whole family were greatly interested in my progress. In the mornings I studied grammar and wrote from dictation with my hostess; in the afternoon I took a long walk with the son, asking the name in Russian of every object we met; and towards the evening Fety, the daughter, was not altogether

unsuccessful in teaching me the art of philandering in her own language.

After three months spent in this manner, when I had acquired a very fair knowledge of Russian, I returned to St. Petersburg to present myself for examination for an interpreter's certificate. The examiner appointed for this purpose was Tom Mitchell, our Consul, and this official, after putting me through a pretty searching test, awarded me a certificate for competence both in the written and spoken language. This, considering the short time I had been studying Russian, was something of an achievement, and the matter being reported to our Ambassador, the late Sir Robert Morier, he offered me an honorary appointment on the staff of the Embassy. This, acting on my father's wish, I accepted, and was forthwith given a desk in the Chancery and set to work translating articles from the Russian newspapers and copying dispatches. Being the youngest member of the staff, I was kept pretty busy, especially on messenger nights, when we rarely got home till three or four o'clock a.m. On one such occasion I must have been half asleep when copying a dispatch, for on the next day I found on my desk a note addressed to me in the handwriting of the Ambassador, which I opened in some trepidation. It began: "My dear Gosling,—Let me on this Christmas Morn . . ." and ended in a strong but kindly expressed wiggling which left me hot with shame. But the rebuke gave me a well-merited lesson, and I do not think I was ever again guilty of carelessness in official matters.

Looking back on these days, I am pretty sure that I was never cut out for a Government official; for though I naturally appreciated the honour of being attached to the Embassy itself, the work did not appeal to me, and my only ambition was to become a soldier. Had I known then that for the next thirty-five years I should be doing similar duties, driving a quill over Government foolscap paper, I should certainly have been pretty sick at heart; but it is sometimes fortunate that we cannot see into the future.

St. Petersburg was a gay place in those days. I had my share of parties and receptions, which gave me good practice in speaking both French and Russian, and the advantage of meeting many clever and interesting people. The strange complexity of the Russian mentality, their intolerance, and a certain veiled hostility to foreigners generally, struck me forcibly, though I was not then able to account for it. Now, however, most of us have realized that the true Slav Russians are in reality more Oriental than European, and that there is little in common between them and the other races of Europe.

During the summer months my father rented a villa near Helsingfors, in Finland, where delightful sailing could be had in the fjord. There was also some excellent trout fishing within easy reach at a place called Haraka, where a splendid stream flowed through the pine forest. The trout ran large, but would not be beguiled with a fly, though no particular skill was needed to take them with an artificial minnow or spoon bait. The best I ever landed was a fish of fourteen pounds, who foul-hooked himself in the tail and took out all my line over the falls. It was a dangerous-looking place with a heavy rush of water, quite sufficient to submerge the flimsy canoe from which I was fishing, and no swimmer could have lived in it for many minutes; but my boatman, who was a good sportsman, asked if we should follow my fish—and follow him we did, killing him at the bottom of the falls.

In the following year (1889) my father accepted the appointment of Minister to the Central American Republics, and though Sir Robert Morier offered to retain me at my work in the Embassy at St. Petersburg it was finally decided that I should accompany my family to Guatemala, where I was appointed honorary attaché to the Legation.

After a brief period spent in England we sailed in the R.M.S. "Atrato" to Colon, where we arrived after a quite uneventful voyage, and then proceeded by train to Panamá, which was a very different place thirty years ago from what it is now. Dirt and mosquitoes were then the prevalent features, and the principal hotel was a ramshackle wooden building replete with every conceivable discomfort. Yellow Jack, as the deadly fever was familiarly called, was unpleasantly common, as the daily funeral processions through the streets testified, and travellers took care to spend as short a time as possible in this uncomfortable and disease-haunted city. Since the building of the Panamá Canal the Americans have effected a wonderful transformation of these disagreeable conditions, and Panamá is now not only a perfectly healthy abode for white men to live in, but boasts of all the comforts and luxuries of modern civilization.

Panamá, from the historical point of view, is of not a little interest, having been one of the earliest settlements of the Spanish conquerors, and, later, the scene of many of Drake's exploits, which included the sack of the treasure contained in the cathedral. I found that the memory of our great navigator still lingers with the inhabitants, for an Englishman—an old resident—told me that it was common for nurses to say to their children when naughty, "*Chaque, Drake!*" ("Look out, Drake is coming!").

We took the first available steamer for San José, the port of the Republic of Guatemala, and after a ten days' journey on the swelling bosom of the Pacific Ocean we landed at that port, whence a short distance by train brought us to Guatemala city.

CHAPTER V

GUATEMALA

AT the time of my arrival in Guatemala foreign emigration on a large scale to Latin America had only just started, and the natives had not yet conceived the dislike, mingled with contempt, for foreigners which afterwards became common. These feelings were, on the whole, not surprising, for the natives, both of pure and mixed Spanish blood, were in many ways a people of no little culture and refinement, and the ways of the European emigrant, who, as a rule, had little education and less manners, disgusted and shocked them. Macaulay tells us that in England in the sixteenth century the Spaniard was looked upon as a superior being, almost, indeed, a superman, and thirty years ago the old colonial families of South and Central America had retained to a considerable degree the culture and qualities of their heroic ancestors. That the Indian races, with whom they had in many cases intermarried, were also a people by no means without culture is amply borne out by the records of the conquest of Mexico and Peru. One document in particular, the preamble to the will of Mancio Serra de Leguisamo, the last survivor of the conquerors, signed at Cuzco in 1589, gives particular evidence to this effect ; for this old soldier, who had from first to last taken an active part in the cruel repression of the people ruled over by the Incas, admits that their civilization was equal, if not superior, to that of the Spaniards themselves.

The inhabitants of Central and South America are of three classes—the pure-blooded Spaniards, few in number and in most cases descendants of old Spanish families ; the mixed Spanish-Indian races which form the majority ; and the Indians, civilized and wild. It is principally in Brazil, though to a smaller extent in other Latin American countries, that a third race exists, the Sambos, a cross between the Indian and negro, which usually results in a very undesirable type of humanity.

The Spanish word for gentleman is *caballero*, a word which means horseman—a man who goes about mounted and not on foot—and the bewildered contempt which the inhabitants of the Latin American Republics felt when the European emigrants flocked to their countries was not a little owing to their uncouth appearance in the saddle and to their habit of falling off their horses. Even those who, in their own countries, had been accustomed to riding were placed almost in the same category,

for their method of riding was unsightly compared with the grace and elegance of the Spanish cavaliers. Railways in those days, it must be remembered, were non-existent, and the only way of getting from place to place was on horse- or muleback.

At the time when I arrived in Guatemala foreigners were rather an object of curiosity and interest, and I was shown every kindness and hospitality by the people. Fortunately, I already knew Spanish fluently, and was thus able to mix in society less as a foreigner than as one of themselves.

A very delightful form of hospitality was shown by our friends in coming round to our house in the mornings with horses to take us out riding, and to show us the country, which is very beautiful in the neighbourhood of the capital. In the evenings one called at the houses of friends, where, as a rule, dancing was the principal amusement. In those days dancing in London was a very different affair to what it is now; the polka and valse were the fashionable dances, and were carried out at a good smart pace, turning always the same way; reversing was considered the acme of bad form, and was indeed positively forbidden in many drawing-rooms. Dancing was really then a form of violent exercise, and, though healthy enough, was certainly far from æsthetic. In Guatemala, however, this style was not approved, and they danced then (in the 'nineties) the same slow, cadenced movements which are now in vogue in England.

One of my earliest friends was our neighbour Don Antonio Tabaoda. He was a rich old gentleman, nearly seventy years old, of pure Spanish descent, and of extremely aristocratic appearance. This was not accidental, for he came of an ancient and noble line, and in Spain was entitled to bear rank as a marquis. He was a singularly handsome man, tall and erect, with aquiline features. He was also wealthy and had two large *fincas*, or cattle farms, not far from the capital, besides other properties in various parts of the Republic. Don Antonio kept aloof from politics, had a fine town house, and a stable full of well-bred horses, both for riding and driving.

The first expedition my brother Audley and I made was to his *finsa* of Las Monjas, a pleasant ride of about thirty miles, through an undulating and cultivated country. Here we spent a pleasant week, seeing with interest the working of the farm, the breaking in of the young horses, and the cultivation of the coffee plantations. It was my first glimpse of the romance of Spanish America, and I enjoyed every moment of it. On leaving, Don Antonio made us each a present of a chestnut pony, broken to saddle, and two small but good-looking unbroken mares. In

those days it was not uncommon for the great landowners to present their friends with mounts, and what more delightful present could horseflesh-loving boys desire.

Rufus, as I called the chestnut, was the first animal that I had owned, and being a steady mount I learnt a good deal of riding on his back, trotting about the pleasant, flowery lanes of Guatemala. One of the mares to be broken—a black—was sent out to a small property belonging to my brother-in-law, where my brother was working, and the other I kept myself and attempted to ride, but she bucked me off so often that I finally traded her for a good-looking but elderly 'Frisco pony that belonged to some American horse dealers.

Pill-Box, as my new acquisition was called, was what was then known as a quarter horse, namely, an animal that could race a quarter of a mile. He was a good-looking mouse-coloured animal, with a flowing white mane and tail like spun silk, and very spirited. I spent many happy hours on his back.

On our arrival in Guatemala the President was Don Manuel Lisandro Barillas, a typical half-military Latin American ruler of those times. Of mixed Spanish and Indian blood, he was a dashing horseman and prided himself on the quality of the cattle he bestrode. I soon became intimate with him and his family, and often rode out with his son, a boy of about my own age. Another pleasant companion, though considerably older than myself in years, was Pacheco, the American minister. He was descended from an old Spanish family of California, and had been Governor in San Francisco.

Pacheco was kindness and hospitality itself and owned a darky cook. At the entrance to his official residence a printed notice, "Walk right in," was posted in a conspicuous place. Few officials of to-day would, I think, care to advertise their hospitality so openly. The minister had been an old ranchman, and, riding with me one day, as we were passing some cows he said, "Say, Sonny, have you ever seen a cow tailed?" "No," I replied, at which he put his horse to a quick gallop, ran alongside the startled cow, and, catching the animal by the tail, gave it a sudden twist which threw it on its side. This I thought a wonderful performance for a stout, elderly gentleman, and conceived for him a boyish admiration which no diplomatist has since succeeded in inspiring me with.

My brother Audley, as I have already mentioned, was learning ranching at a place called San Geronimo, where my brother-in-law had purchased a tract of land adjoining a large and valuable coffee estate belonging to an Englishman named Harris. The house on this estate was a rambling old building which had

formerly been a convent, and there was a legend that, at the time of the Spanish War of Independence, the monks inhabiting it had been murdered. As a result of the legend the house was supposed to be haunted, and no native would remain in it after dark.

My brother having come to town for a few days I determined to return with him and visit the ranch, and we set off gaily one morning, happy to be travelling together through such romantic scenery. We were "new chums," however, and at the first evening halt we secured our horses so badly that they got away and made off to the convent whence they came. The next morning we both looked very blank when we saw they had disappeared, but had to make the best of it, and, carrying our saddles and bridles, we proceeded to our destination on foot. It was a hard and hilly climb, and every now and again we stopped to refresh ourselves with luscious mangoes which grew by the wayside. Finally, after a very tiring day, we reached San Geronimo at nine in the evening, hungry and footsore. We were not expected, and after a frugal meal of bread and milk we went to bed, my brother and I sleeping in the same room.

It was then late, and, entirely oblivious of the stories I had heard, I soon fell into one of those profound slumbers when the bed seems to sink into the ground beneath you—such a sleep as only comes after hard physical exertion.

Between twelve and one I awoke suddenly, feeling desperately frightened but without knowing why. I sat up in bed and listened, and thought I heard footsteps—measured footsteps—passing to and fro in the corridor outside the room. Part of the corridor floor was of wood and part of stone, and one could hear this change of sound as the footsteps passed from one to the other. I got out of bed and looked out of the door. A tropical moon was setting and wrapped the old building in its mysterious rays; but I could see nothing to account for the footsteps, which had ceased. Silence reigned—a silence that seemed uncanny. Still feeling very uncomfortable, I shut the door and, getting back to bed, leaned over and woke my brother, who had been sleeping peacefully in spite of my movements. I told him about what I had heard, and he answered rather testily that it was nothing, that such sounds were always heard at night in the convent, and that he wanted to sleep. Meanwhile the footsteps had begun again, and I asked if he heard them. "Yes," he said; "but do go to sleep."

But I had had enough of this place. I got up and firmly declared my intention of riding on to our destination. Very reluctantly my brother consented, and we got up, saddled our

horses, which had found way safely back to their stable, and rode on to the ranch, which was three hours away. On the road my brother told me that once, sleeping in another room in the convent, he had woken up and seen a figure leaning over his bed, that he had gazed at it for some time, when it had disappeared. He could not, he said, see the face, but thought it was a man. The morning air seemed to me very chilly as he told me this tale, and I vowed I would never again sleep at the convent if I could avoid it.

During the days I spent at the ranch we organized a deer hunt in the mountains, in which we had some exciting chases, but got nothing. We also had a hunt on horseback for the black mare, which, as I have already stated, was presented to my brother by Don Antonio Tabaoda. An attempt had been made to break her, but she had got loose and had escaped. After a long ride we found her grazing in a hollow in the hills. When she saw us she stood erect with mane and tail sweeping the ground; she looked a perfect picture. We galloped after her, and one of the cowboys, mounted on a fast pony, got near enough to throw his lasso. It caught the mare round the neck, and she struggled like a mad thing. Suddenly the leather thong snapped and she was away before we could realize it. Satanita, for so they had christened her, was never seen again, and whether she was stolen or injured herself and fell a victim to the coyotes we never knew. Probably the former, because she had never been branded.

The next morning I set out for Guatemala with one of the men of the ranch who was going in to buy provisions. By mutual agreement we made a long way of it, and, avoiding the convent, slept at a small ranch beyond it, reaching our destination on the following day without further incident.

My task at the Legation as honorary attaché had hitherto merely consisted of copying work for my father. Now, however, some trouble had arisen between the local authorities and our Vice-Consul at a small place called Puerto Cortéz in the neighbouring Republic of Honduras. It was therefore decided that I should proceed there and endeavour to straighten matters out. Puerto Cortéz is a small port on the Atlantic, while Guatemala is on the Pacific side, and—there being no connecting railways—the journey was a matter of some consequence. As a first step I hired mules and carriers to accompany me to Livingston, a port in the extreme north-west of the Republic. I have never felt much pleasure in riding mules, even private ones. It lacks the exhilaration and romance of being on horseback, and the two long ears ever nodding in front conduce to weariness. Besides,



" SATANITA WAS AWAY BEFORE WE COULD REALIZE IT "

though very sure-footed, if a mule does come down on some bad and muddy pass it will very often, in order to regain its footing, stand on its recumbent rider! Hired mules are, of course, wholly unsatisfactory, usually having uncomfortable paces and having to be driven hard by whip and spur. My animals on this occasion were no exception to the rule.

The road after leaving Guatemala leads through thick forest, and I heard for the first time the never-ceasing murmurs of the jungle, of which the dominant motive is the drone of the cicada, a sort of great cricket. To that is added the chatter of the small monkeys, the caw of the parrots, the occasional roar of one of the large fauna, and the screech of the macaw. This medley of sounds impresses and awes the new-comer, but after living for some time in these lands one ceases to notice it.

On nearing Livingston the *camino real*, or royal road, as the main highway is always called in Spanish America, became an almost impenetrable morass; the sun was hidden for days and a steady rain fell. On remarking on this to the *arriero*, he said, yes, the locality had the reputation of a rainfall lasting for thirteen months in the year.

Three days away from my immediate destination I found that I could continue my journey by canoe on a small stream called the Livingston, and I accordingly arranged to do so, sending back the mules, which were now completely exhausted after struggling for days in mud up to their bellies.

It was pleasant after this, to sit in a canoe manned by two Indians and float down-stream, aided by their steady but effortless paddling. The mosquitoes were not unduly troublesome, and the scenery and bird-life was a constant source of interest. I saw several *iguanas* (a large lizard) lying on the branches overhanging the waters, and shot one, which was over three feet long. His belly was bright orange-coloured, and the Indians, having roasted him over the embers of a fire, eat him with great relish. We killed several, the flesh of which I tasted myself. Apart from the unappetizing appearance of this creature, I found its flavour rather similar to young chicken. We also killed a *Tepescuintle*, a sort of amphibious rabbit, the English name of which is, I believe, hog-rabbit. This is really most excellent eating, succulent and juicy, and the stew of it, which we had for supper, is a thing not to be forgotten.

Livingston was in those days a small village, consisting of one street and perhaps a hundred tin shanties. A small port on the Atlantic, its business was trade with the interior by pack mules along the very road I had come. I had a letter of introduction to one of the chief merchants, an American named Potts,

and on arrival I entered one of the stores to ask where he lived. The owner, also an American, said, "Why, old Forty Drops?" and sent a boy with me to show the way. The house was a little way outside and situated near a very swampy, mosquito-haunted lagoon.

I found Mr. Potts at home and very hospitably disposed, for he asked me to put up with him and sent the boy back for my luggage. To my amusement, while waiting the latter's return, he asked me, with some anxiety in his manner, if I wouldn't have "forty drops." Agreeing to this, I found it meant a small glass of American rye whisky neat. I soon saw the reason for my host's sobriquet, for during my stay he consumed a good many bottles of whisky, divided up into potions of forty drops.

There was nothing of much interest in Livingston, except the alligators in the lagoon, of which Mr. Potts was an ardent hunter. His method was to bait an iron trap with a piece of high meat, and I had the luck to see one caught by this method. Potts told me that shortly before my arrival a child which was playing near the water was seized by an alligator, and that his mother, who was washing clothes nearby, going to his rescue, was taken as well.

I found that in order to get to my ultimate destination I must now take steamer to Belize, the capital of the British Colony of Honduras. This and Guiana are our only British possessions in the Spanish-American mainland.

Embarking in a small steamer in the afternoon, we anchored off Belize on the following morning, and the first thing I learned was that an epidemic of yellow fever was raging in the colony. However, there was no going back so I took my traps to the nearest hotel, and, having dressed, I set out for Government House to pay my respects to the Governor, Sir Alfred Maloney. While waiting my audience, the A.D.C. told me that His Excellency had, within the week—lost his wife, his private secretary and his valet. This serves to remind one what the fearful scourge meant only a few years ago; happily it is now almost extinct in tropical America. After a short delay Sir Alfred received me, and although I did not wish under these sad circumstances to do more than pay a formal call, he insisted on hearing my plans and in helping them forward to the best of his ability. He said that he did not invite me to stay at Government House as he did not consider it a healthy spot; he advised me, indeed, to get away as soon as possible, and finally caused arrangements to be made for me to leave for Puerto Cortéz in a small steamer in the service of the Government. I expressed the gratitude which I sincerely felt for the Governor's kindness and took my

departure. The A.D.C. invited me to lunch at the club, where, in spite of the near presence of death, considerable conviviality obtained amongst the Scotch settlers who form the bulk of the population ; for here, as elsewhere, whisky in the form of cocktails was considered a specific against yellow fever. After lunch we rode out to the racecourse along one of the two roads of which Belize then boasted. The other one we avoided, for it led to the cemetery.

I was aboard my schooner on the following morning at 6 a.m., and landed at Puerto Cortéz early in the afternoon, where I took up my residence at the local hotel, or *fonda*, a very unpretentious establishment.

The next days were spent in inquiring into the matter which my business had for its immediate object. It was a tiresome proceeding concerning certain action taken by the local *Comandante* against our consular representative. The *Comandante* belonged to that somewhat theatrical type of South American official which is extremely difficult and often unpleasant to deal with, and I made but little progress in reaching a solution to the question. Having collected a certain amount of information, however, I determined to proceed to Tegucigalpa, the capital of the Republic of Honduras, and there to lay the matter before the Government of the Republic.

A train was leaving early next morning, and I was at the station betimes with my luggage, which was portable, fortunately, as matters turned out, for at the last moment my friend the *Comandante* sprung a new surprise on me.

The British Vice-Consul had come to see me off, and to him I entrusted my luggage while I got my ticket. In response to my application the man at the office informed me that I could not have a ticket, for the train was full. Expostulation proving in vain, and as the train was about to start, I pushed my way on to the platform, took my seat in a half-empty compartment, while the Vice-Consul passed my luggage through the window. The guard was apparently not in the plot—perhaps he belonged to another political party in opposition to that of the *Comandante*—and the train started without further incident. When the guard did turn up, I fancy he charged me something above the normal fare, but I paid it without a murmur and sat down after my agitated departure, to enjoy the scenery and reflect on my good luck in getting away. Shortly afterwards we came to a bridge over a high, rocky chasm in the mountains, and here the train stopped and the guard told me to get down. This, I thought, might be a second attempt on the part of the *Comandante*, and I prepared for passive resistance. My alarms were, however,

unfounded, for the passengers all got down as well, and that for a very good reason. The bridge was not safe with our additional weight, so the train went on first, while we followed, picking our way cautiously over the sleepers.

We arrived at Tegucigalpa towards evening without further incident, and I settled down in a reasonably comfortable *posada* with a pleasant sense of having so far been successful in my diplomatic mission.

Tegucigalpa I found a pleasant little town, or rather village, surrounded by pine forests, whose dark green foliage formed a pleasant contrast to the red, sandy soil.

I was busy now for several days negotiating my case with Señor Bonilla, the Foreign Minister, and in the intervals I associated with the leading Hondurean families and the foreign colony, which was chiefly composed of Americans, who appeared to be living in no little luxury.

After dinner at my hotel, a group of Hondureans would usually come round to my rooms and sing to the accompaniment of the guitar. Except for our music the little town was wrapt in silence after eight o'clock, for there was no theatre, no café, and in those days, happily, no cinema. I never saw a town so still and peaceful, and its inhabitants must have spent a primitive and happy life, very different from that of most other capitals.

My work with the Government being successfully ended, I was free to leave. I had decided, however, not to retrace my tracks, but to ride from Tegucigalpa to a port on the Pacific called Amapala and there to take the mail boat back to San José, and so on by train to Guatemala.

At daybreak one fine morning, therefore, having taken my early morning coffee—always a delightful concoction in the lands where it grows—I was busy superintending the packing of my effects on the baggage mules when a number of cavaliers rode up, stating that they had come to see me off, and ride a few miles with me, as was the pleasant and courtly custom in those days. Most of the horsemen were members of the American and British Colony whom I had met, and among them was also the Consul.

We set off, our horses moving briskly and champing their bits in the fresh morning air as we rode through the fragrant pine forest. At about eight o'clock my cavaliers, feeling no doubt the want of the early morning *traguito*, or nip of rum, left me, all but the Consul. I had only made his acquaintance recently, as he had been ill with fever when I arrived, and, after riding on for a bit, I asked him what all these Americans and English were doing in Tegucigalpa. "Escaped criminals," he

replied, and I then recollected that Honduras was then one of the few countries which had no Extradition Treaty with other States, and was, of course, the happy hunting ground of these gentry. The Vice-Consul mentioned some of their names, which called to mind many of the *causes célèbres* of those days. I had, in fact, been riding surrounded by as choice a band of outlaws as a man could wish to meet, and I must confess a very pleasant and gentlemanly set I found them.

I parted from the Vice-Consul and continued my way accompanied by my *arriero*, and although the country was in a disturbed state, owing to a revolution, I reached Amapala safely, and in a few days was home once more.

CHAPTER VI

DON MANUEL BARILLAS

I FOUND on my return that my friend Señor Barillas was about to vacate the Presidency to his successor, and the political situation was therefore, as is usual at these times, a little disturbed. At the first opportunity I called to see the outgoing President, and remained to lunch. This was always an original and charming meal at his house, for the cooking was in the native Indian style, not a single European dish being served, and the food was always exceedingly good. It began by a glass or two of spirits ; then we had eggs cooked with chiles and fragrant, freshly made maize cakes called *tortillas* ; then a stew of pig flavoured with saffron and hot peppers ; then the staple dish of *frijoles*—black beans—cooked as only an Indian knows how : finishing up with tropical fruits of all kinds, fragrant black coffee, and home-made cigars. To such a banquet an Aztec prince must often have sat down in the days before the conquest.

After it was over my host said, “ Don Cecilio, as you know, I am laying down my office in a few days. Together with my son Alfonso, and a band of faithful followers, I am retiring to my coffee estates on the Costa Cuca in the north of the Republic. We start from here on horseback in a week’s time, and I think that the journey would be of interest and of value to you. Will you come ? ”

I gladly accepted the invitation, subject to the consent of my father, under whose orders I stood officially, and after taking leave of my hosts returned home to bear the news and obtain permission for this new venture. It was readily granted.

The appointed day found me at early dawn at the house of the President, where a busy and attractive scene met my eyes. Half a dozen splendid Peruvian horses caparisoned with silver-mounted high-peaked Mexican saddles were being held in the courtyard by cavalry soldiers. An equal number of mules, as change mounts, were also in readiness, while baggage was being packed on others. Our party consisted of Don Manuel, his son Alfonso, his son-in-law Ojeda, half a dozen political adherents, and a dozen or more cavalry soldiers carrying their swords and carbines. After the usual cup of coffee and *tortillas* we mounted and clattered out of the courtyard, a most impressive troop. Don Manuel beckoned me to ride on his right hand, the remainder

of the party fell into twos according to their inclinations, and the soldiers, in charge of a captain, preceded us, looking very business-like, their carbines held ready for action across the pommels of their saddles, for an outgoing chief of the State has numerous enemies, and it was well to be prepared for eventualities. We all carried revolvers as well, Don Manuel displaying two of these weapons, of heavy calibre, which were suspended from the horn of his saddle. We carried our cloaks and wraps strapped behind to the cante, the native woven silk *serapes* of the President and his suite striking a brave note of colour.

I was riding my Californian horse Pill-Box, but my host had a second in reserve in case, not being accustomed to the roads of Guatemala, my own mount tired. The reserve horse was a small but beautifully shaped Peruvian, golden bay in colour, with a flowing dark mane and tail, and I was looking forward greatly to mounting him, for, on the road, a change of horses is a rest both for the rider and the animal.

We rode through Antigua, the old capital, which was entirely destroyed by earthquakes in the eighteenth century, and our horses' shoes rang out sharply on the cobblestones of this silent and dead city. The earthquake must have been a stupendous convulsion of nature : massive stone buildings had been thrown one against the other in grotesque attitudes, and their ruins contrasted strangely with the fertility and verdure of the countryside. From here our road lay almost due north. After riding on steadily for about three hours we reached an eminence which commanded the village of Atitlan. Don Manuel was evidently not very sure of his reception here, for the soldiers advanced *en vedette*, whilst we drew rein on the hill-side. Everything was in order, however, as they soon trotted back. As we advanced through the narrow streets the ex-President, dropping his reins on his horse's neck, scattered handfuls of coins, which he took from his saddle-bags, to the people who had assembled to watch us pass. As might be expected, he had a very friendly reception, and there were many and loud cries of "*Viva Don Manuel Lisandro !*" and "*Viva nuestro Presidente !*" which the leader of our party acknowledged by bowing low, hat in hand. He looked a handsome figure, with his strong, half-Indian features, grizzled hair and moustache, and slight but well-knit figure, seated on his handsome and spirited Peruvian horse, which he managed with grace and dexterity. At the farther end of the town we halted before a house where we were evidently expected and where lunch awaited us. Our host was one of Don Manuel's strong political friends and adherents, and had no doubt inspired the friendly demonstrations we received on entering the town. A

crowd assembled to watch our departure, but as the largesse was no longer forthcoming they seemed, I thought, less enthusiastic than when we arrived. We had now a steady ride to our night quarters, the small town of Totoncapán, which we reached just as dusk was falling. There the same military precautions were observed, and we again found comfortable quarters prepared for us, and at dinner several attractive-looking ladies graced the meal. Afterwards there was some card-playing—apparently for high stakes—but I was tired after my long but interesting day spent in the saddle, and I retired, to bed to reflect on the knowledge I had acquired of Latin American politics.

The next morning our route was uphill, for we were approaching the mountains, and after a while my Californian horse showed symptoms of tiring, so I changed my saddle to the golden bay, and found him fresh and a wholly delightful mount. These Peruvian horses are descendants of the Moorish barbs brought to Spanish America by the conquerors. Peru, however, being mainly a mining and not an agricultural country like Argentina and the adjacent States, its horses were more carefully handled than in other parts of South America, and were not suffered to run wild on the Pampas. Hence the great beauty and docility, combined with fine spirit of these animals, whose blood has in recent times been mixed with that of the imported Andalusian horses.

The Peruvian is a natural and very elegant pacer, with considerable action in front, yet so comfortable to ride that it is as if sitting in an arm-chair. These horses are seldom galloped, as this is considered to spoil their pace. The *chalan*, or horse-coper, will, when showing them off, carry a glass filled to the brim with water, and, holding it in his left hand, put the animal to speed. If not a drop is spilt the animal is regarded as having first-class action, and the price asked will be a high one, often as much as £150 to £200. They are broken in the old-fashioned manner of the Spanish school by a broad nose-band to which single reins are attached. The bit, a curb, as is used throughout Latin America, is only made use of when his education is complete, and the result is a beautifully silky mouth, so fine that, as the saying goes in Spanish, you may stop your horse by blowing on the reins.

Such a horse was the *doradillo* which I now bestrode, and which gave me that ineffable sensation of happiness and superiority which only a good mount can give to a horseman and horse-lover.

Sad to relate, this beautiful breed of horses is now almost extinct in Peru, and has been replaced by coarser and cheaper breeds imported from Argentina and Chile. On my last visit

to Peru, in 1910, I only saw one, and that a wholly inferior specimen of this interesting breed.

At about midday we approached another village where it was the intention to stop and have some food, but, at the entrance, we found the inhabitants collected, and it was evident that their feelings were not friendly, for some stones were thrown, one of which barely missed Don Manuel, at whose side I was riding. It seemed a pity, for I am sure that his holster contained further stores of largesse, which would have been scattered with due liberality had the attitude of the villagers been less antagonistic. But such are the vicissitudes of political life.

We therefore made a detour and presently halted for an alfresco meal, while our horses cropped a few mouthfuls of the sweet grass growing by the side of a stream. Continuing our way, we halted at a wayside inn, perched above Lake Solola, where we passed the night. In the morning we were off again at dawn, and through the mountain mists I saw flocks of wild fowl on the water of the lake. After a pretty stiff climb we reached the small town of Peten, an Indian village inhabited by an Indian tribe of warlike appearance, who carried swords instead of the customary *machete*, and wore red turbans wound round their heads giving them a very Eastern appearance.

The district of Peten was, in those days, a sort of autonomous Indian Republic which paid a subvention to the Guatemala Government of a sum amounting to about ten thousand pounds annually, on condition of their being left in peace and unmolested. Strangers were not allowed to journey into the interior, and would probably be killed if they tried to do so. As the village was on the high road one was permitted to rest and bait one's horses, but the time limit was a couple of hours, and if one overstayed this limit the Indian *alcaide* gave one a very clear hint to proceed on one's way. It was at this village that we stopped for refreshment for ourselves and beasts. The Peten district was reported in those days to contain valuable gold mines, and I learnt afterwards that, during his presidency, Don Manuel had dispatched three soldiers thither with instructions to ascertain the truth of the rumours concerning gold and precious metals. The Indians, it was said, caught these unfortunate men, put their eyes out, and then conducted them back to the high road, telling them to return and inform their master that any subsequent envoys would meet with a similar fate.

There was also a legend that Cortez, descending from Mexico into Central America in search of more gold and treasures, was forced, on his march, to abandon a sick horse on the shores of a lake in the extreme north of the territory. Before going on he

strongly impressed the Indians that they were to take great care of the animal, and that he would fetch it on his return. The horse died, however, and the Indians, terrified at the thought of having incurred the conqueror's anger, and wishing to propitiate him, carved a monster horse of stone, which is said to stand there to this day.

After leaving the Indian village our road was a steep and mountainous one. In the evening we reached Quetzaltenango, and the light had waned as we clattered through its narrow, torturous, and dirty little streets.

We halted before a large, single-storied house whose massive walls and heavy iron gratings betrayed its antiquity. The carved doors opened at our approach, and we rode into a spacious *patio*, or courtyard. "*Apeese*," said Don Manuel. "*Está Ud. en su casa*" ("Dismount, for you are in your house").

After a refreshing bath in one of the *pilas* in the courtyard we sat down in state to a long and choice banquet—Don Manuel, the principal members of his suite, and myself at the head of the table, and the retainers, soldiers, and others below the salt. Several ladies, who appeared to be living in the house, were also presented to me as *sobrinas*, nieces of Don Manuel. It is a somewhat euphemistic term in Latin America. Anyhow, we spent a very pleasant evening, which was not in any way marred by the fact that a large and somewhat menacing crowd collected outside our house, for we knew that our doors were massive and our bolts strong. The following day we learnt that, after leaving our street, the mob had proceeded to the market-place and there burnt their late President in effigy. Don Manuel was evidently by no means popular here, and during the days we spent in Quetzaltenango he did not go beyond his door. I, however, was, of course, not subject to such restrictions, and visited several families in the second capital of the Republic, including our kind and hospitable Consul, Mr. Hugo Fleischmann, who is, I believe, after all these years, still acting in his official capacity in that city.

After several pleasant days, our departure was announced for the following morning, and we were up betimes and in the saddle once more, Don Manuel bestriding his favourite *moro*, a blue roan, which he always elected to ride when he wished either to look his best or to be prepared for eventualities. The hostility which had been manifested on the night of our arrival appeared to have subsided, for we met with no opposition as our imposing cavalcade made its way through the town. We were now leaving the gentle and equable climate of the highlands, and descending a steep road which led to the fierce heats and tropical vegetation of the Costa Cuca. After riding a few hours the change became

manifest, as was also the attitude of the Indians and travellers we passed, who all bowed low and reverently to Don Manuel, who was now in his own country.

A very fat, dark-visaged priest, who was being carried by a stout-limbed Indian in a sort of sedan chair rigged up on his back and supported by a broad leather band over his forehead, stopped his human steed and pronounced on us an eloquent blessing, to which we all responded by bowing our heads.

On this road I saw a phenomena of nature which was not repeated in any of my subsequent travels. Large quantities of ordinary earthworms had apparently appeared after a shower of rain and had been stricken with sudden death. They lay thick for several hundred yards along the road, and as our horses trod into them the stench was so appalling that it was a relief when we had passed to breathe again the moist, scented air of the tropics. Nor Don Manuel nor any member of the party could give me any explanation of the occurrence, or why these worms should have perished in millions just on this particular spot.

At midday we halted at an Indian village in the midst of a tropical forest. We were evidently expected, for the head-men at once came up and bared their heads reverently before their chief. There was also much coming and going among the women, and signs of the preparation of food. It was evident that, although the late President had many enemies, the Indians were his friends and looked upon him as their protector. Presently we sat down to our feast in the woods, the women waiting on us silently and with great care and attention. After the customary *copita* of white rum the meal began. It consisted of a great number of dishes cooked with red peppers and very fiery to the palate. What they were made of I cannot say but the taste was excellent. Each dish was served on broad palm leaves, and the repast ended with cool, juicy pine-apple which was grateful to the tongue and removed the sting of the peppers. Immediately it was over Don Manuel made a speech in the Indian dialect, thanking our hosts for their hospitality, and we then remounted.

During the morning ride we had been descending from the highlands, and now we soon emerged from the forest into a flat, very warm, but fertile country, the soil of which was of a rich red colour. Coffee plantations were all about us, the delicate, well-tended trees bearing a mass of white flowers, which would presently, with the coming of autumn, turn to deep red berries. The meadows were high with luscious grasses, in which cattle and small native horses, their coats shining in this hothouse-like temperature, fed contentedly.

Don Manuel told me that this was the beginning of his property of La Libertad, and that in another couple of hours we should be at his home. The sun was setting when we rode up to the house, a modern and well-appointed wooden building with a broad veranda running round it. Our horses were led away, and we sat down to the luxury of a cocktail and a smoke, after which a cool, refreshing bath gave us an appetite for an excellent and well-served dinner.

After sunset the night closed in quickly, and a cool breeze, scented with the flowers of the coffee trees, revived us after the fierce heat of the day. My quarters were in a wooden house detached from the main building, and consisted of a small bedroom and sitting-room, with windows opening on either side. I wished our friends good night, and retiring to this comfortable abode slept peacefully till sunrise.

It has always seemed to me that late risers miss the most beautiful part of the day, and this is especially true of tropical countries, when the freshness of early morn, the fragrant scent of flowers, and the benign rays of the sun are in such contrast to the glare and heat of the day.

Like most Latin Americans, Don Manuel was an early riser, and I found him on the veranda enjoying his early cup of black coffee and a cigarette.

"*Ola, Don Cecilio,*" he said, "you are quite a son of the land; break your fast, for we are going to visit the stables."

The coffee, the pride of what this vast estate produced, tasted as only real coffee which has not crossed the ocean can, and the cigarette, also home produced, was real tobacco.

"*Vamos,*" said Don Manuel, and—willingly enough, you may be sure—I followed my host and some of his retinue to the stables, which were at a little distance from the house. They contained about a hundred and fifty horses of all kinds and breeds—natives, quick little animals with bright, glossy coats, and half-breds from California, imported Andalusians from Spain, with majestic carriage and dignified, lofty action: horses of every size and colour. One after another was taken out and shown, and it must have been over two hours before we had seen them all.

After the last animal had been returned to his stable my host said to me, "Well, Don Cecilio, which do you like best?"

I was puzzled what to say, but finally gave my vote for a bay which had taken my fancy.

"And how do you like this one?" he said, pointing out a curiously marked but very handsome dun pacing pony.

Again I expressed approval.

"Take these two out of this stable," said Don Manuel, to an attendant, "and put them in the other stable where Don Cecilio's horse is standing. They are his."

It was a princely and unexpected gift which it would have been churlish to refuse, and which, indeed, to be frank, I had no intention of refusing. I thanked Don Manuel in an earnest way that he must have known to be sincere, and, unable to contain my excitement, I ordered one of my new mounts to be saddled at once, after which I mounted the second. The bay's name was Ruby and the dun's Naranjo, so called on account of his orange-like colour.

I now settled down temporarily to a very pleasant existence at La Libertad. We rode out together morning and evening and explored the country round for many a league. We had no neighbours other than the small Indian farmers who came to see Don Manuel and treated him with great respect, though they were evidently flattered by the unceremonious, hail-fellow-well-met way he had with them. One of these Indians, quite an important man in his way, on being introduced to me, said very slowly and firmly in Spanish, "I like foreigners, but it is a pity they eat babies." As he was so convinced of my cannibalistic habits I did not attempt to disillusion him, for it seemed a shame to destroy what was evidently a firmly cherished illusion.

One morning Don Manuel informed me that he had imported a shipload of blacks from one of the Polynesian Islands to work on the coffee plantation, and that they were due to arrive at Champerico, the nearest port, in a few days. "They are countrymen of yours, Don Cecilio," he added, "and I should be grateful if you would go and meet them, as none of us can speak English."

Of course I declared my willingness and left the next morning, riding Ruby. The heat, as I approached the coast, was terrific, and the ride not a very enjoyable one. Champerico, the port, proved a wretched place, whose only motive for existence was due to the fact that an occasional Pacific steamer called there on its way north. I had a letter to an employee of La Libertad, a German who attended to the dispatch of coffee from this port, and with him I lodged in a poor, tumble-down shanty, where I shared his frugal supper. He was a young and very militant ex-student, and, after we had supped, entertained me, over many glasses of beer, with the songs of the Fatherland. His voice was rather a good one, and, after about his fifteenth glass, he sang Körner's stirring "Du Schwert an meiner Linken" with great fire and expression. After this I declared my intention of going to bed, and retired to my room, quickly undressed, and blew out the candle. No sooner had I done this than there

was a sound of scurrying and what seemed to be one or more animals scampering over my bed. On lighting a match I saw to my horror a dozen or more large rats fighting over the candle, which they had snatched from the table at my bedside. That was enough for me, for I have a horror of rats, and, again lighting a match, I jumped up—these disgusting creatures scuttling away on every side—and taking a wrap I lay down in the garden outside.

My adventure banished sleep for the moment, but I dozed off after a while, and was awakened at five by my companion of the previous night, with the welcome news that the sailing ship conveying the blacks whom I had come to meet was anchored in the port and was already landing its passengers. After a hurried breakfast, therefore, I went down to the landing-stage.

The islanders were a sorry-looking lot of men, women, and children, with little or no clothing and unhealthy, scaly-looking skins, due, no doubt, to their long confinement on board. They were of medium size, but one, who introduced himself to me in English as their "Prince," was a perfect giant. I told him to await my return, as we were going to start at once in order to reach La Libertad before nightfall, and I hurried to the stable to saddle my horse. This done, I went back and found my Solomon Islanders—I could not make out, even from the "Prince," exactly what island they came from, but it was one of this group—drawn up with the latter at their head. As I rode up, however, they suddenly bolted like rabbits, only their leader standing his ground. I asked him why his people behaved in this way, and he said they were frightened of my horse, never having seen such an animal before. I told him to go and reassure them, which, after some talking, he succeeded in doing, when, placing myself at their head, with the "Prince" at my side, we started off. As if apologizing for the ignorance of his people in the matter of my horse, which they still eyed with fear, the latter, pointing to some hens scratching in the dust, said that these animals they knew, as they had them in their country. The whole party, indeed, seemed reassured on seeing these fowls, and we made good progress till we reached a stream, which we had to ford, and in which they all started to bathe. I could not blame them, as they all needed a wash, and it was too shallow for there to be much danger from alligators.

After getting my party going again, we came to an Indian hut set in a group of fruit-bearing palm-trees. Unversed in the ways of these people, I was riding along, regardless of danger, when suddenly they broke from all control, shinned up the palms, started throwing down the coco-nuts, and, tearing off the fibre, greedily drank the milk and devoured the pulp. The "Prince"

was as bad as the rest, and my shouts and admonitions passed unheeded. In the midst of it all the owner of the plantation appeared, armed with a gun and long knife, and it took all my power of persuasion to prevent him doing some bodily harm to the islanders. His screams and curses sobered the latter a bit, however, and after a while I succeeded in getting them on the move again. As soon as we got well away I called a halt and sternly told the "Prince" to inform his people that for the remainder of the journey they must obey orders and, above all, not leave the road, otherwise they would be punished. After this we progressed fairly well, and in due course reached La Libertad, where I handed over my Solomon Islanders to the overseer.

I am sorry to say that my countrymen, as Don Manuel persisted in calling them, did not prove a success, for, though well housed and paid at the rates obtaining in the country, they were but indifferent workers, and were for ever fighting with the natives, several being killed on either side. Finally it was found necessary, after much trouble and expense, to repatriate them to their native isle.

My stay at La Libertad, which had lasted for six weeks, was now ending, for it was time that I returned to the capital. I parted from my host with genuine regret and admiration for his many sterling qualities, no less than for his generosity in the matter of horseflesh. My journey and stay with him had given me a real insight into native habits and customs, and the experience was of great value to me in after years.

My return journey was uneventful until we arrived within a few leagues of Guatemala city, where, on a very dark night, the Indian guide who was leading my spare horses strayed from the road. The lights from the town, which were visible below, only seemed to make the darkness more intense, and after wandering about for some time my horse all at once stood still and refused to move. I plied whip and spur without effect, and presently lit a match to see what was the cause of the animal's behaviour. The night was perfectly still, and by the tiny light of the match I saw that my horse was standing at the very edge of a precipitous cliff, down which I had been vainly attempting to force him. Seeing that there was little chance of finding the road until dawn, we off-saddled and made ourselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit, until about an hour before sunrise, when we retraced our way back to the main road, and reached home at about ten o'clock, in time for some much-needed breakfast, for I had eaten nothing since the previous day.

I now settled down to my daily work at the Legation, and for

some months there was no event of interest to record. This peaceful existence was, however, suddenly interrupted by the receipt of a telegram from the convent at San Geronimo containing alarming news about my brother, who, it appeared, had been attacked by natives, severely wounded, and was lying in a critical condition.

CHAPTER VII

SAN GERONIMO

A FAMILY council was held, and it was decided that I should start at once on horseback for San Geronimo. It was then about eight o'clock in the evening, and, after feeding my horse and making a hasty dinner, I mounted and, having got clear of the town, set off at a quick but steady pace. The distance which I had to cover was exactly a hundred miles, and I had decided to ride a fast-pacing Peruvian horse which I had recently bought, a good-looking bay with black points. I kept steadily on without hustling him, for I knew that I must keep something in reserve for the last bit of the road. It was a fine, clear and cool night, and the ride would have been enjoyable had it not been for my anxiety and uncertainty as to my brother's condition. Nevertheless, it was a relief to feel that I might be of service and that every moment brought me nearer to him. Towards one in the morning I became very sleepy, and presently dozed for a moment in the saddle, waking up with that unpleasant and disconcerting start which every horseman who has travelled much at night knows. At 3 a.m. I halted and loosed the girths for a moment, letting Torero nibble a blade or two of grass. He was always a little inclined to be "girth-shy," and I was glad to see, when I remounted, that he gave a half buck or two. For now was the time that his reserve of strength was needed, and I started to send him along at a faster pace than hitherto. I was thoroughly awake now, for the dawn was trembling behind the night, and a cool, gentle breeze was ushering in the new day. Drawing my cloak very securely around me, I now gave my horse the spurs for the first time, and settled down to ride for the winning-post. Another hour and we were in the hilly country, and Torero began to flag. I kept him at it, however, with a resolute spur, for I had made up my mind to be in by daybreak. When at 6 a.m. I rode into the convent Torero could not have gone a step farther. He was done. Hastily summoning a man, I put him in the stable, leaving the saddle on his back, but loosening the girths, and ran into the house. Here I met one of the employees of the *finca*, and hastily asked him how my brother was. The man answered that he was better, consciousness having returned, and at my request showed me up to his room. I found the wounded lad in bed, his head heavily bandaged, but apparently quite himself again, though he had a narrow escape,

the wound being a severe and deep one, and it was a wonder his skull had not been fractured. From two Americans, who assisted in the management of the estate, I heard the details of the story, which were as follows: On the evening of the occurrence—it was Christmas Eve—my brother and the owner of San Geronimo, an Englishman, were taking a walk in the village, when they were suddenly set upon by a band of men. The attack was really directed against my brother's companion, as the natives had a grievance concerning the property, part of which, they considered, belonged to the village as common land. In the struggle the two became separated, but my brother, who was unarmed, put up a good fight, and knocked down several of his assailants with his fists. Finally one of them struck him a tremendous blow on the head with the butt-end of a rifle, and he fell stunned. The blow would probably have killed an ordinary man, but my brother was, and still is, a very tough customer. His companion now returned to the convent, and told what had happened to his two American employees, who, hastily arming themselves, went out to look for the missing man. After searching for some time they returned, saying they could find no trace of him. They went out again, however, and towards daybreak found his hat, cleft by the blow which had struck him, on the side of a steep ravine, which they descended, and there found my brother unconscious with a deep wound in his head. It was surmised that his assailants, after the blow had been struck, believing him to be dead, carried him off and threw him down the ravine in order to hide the body, and that, in the darkness, they did not notice that his hat had fallen off. The two Americans who by their courage and grit were instrumental in saving my brother's life, now conveyed his still unconscious body home. The local medico, who was sent for, sewed up the wound, administered some simple remedies, and after some hours my brother recovered consciousness and, except for weakness coupled with a violent headache, was none the worse for his adventure. He was very glad to see me and wanted to get up and go out, which, of course, I would not allow. I spent the morning with him and the two Americans, discussing the situation. They thought that the people were in a very excited state and that trouble was to be expected. They were right, for towards dusk several shots were fired from the grounds at the house. This little display did not, however, trouble us in any way, and I made an early move for bed, as my eyes were heavy with sleep after my night spent in the saddle.

I went to see my horse before dinner, and found the faithful animal looking very dejected. He had been thoroughly washed

down with rum, but without effect, as he refused to touch his food. After dinner I tumbled into bed and was soon asleep. This time my rest was untroubled by ghosts, but I had been careful to sleep in another part of the house, next door to my brother's room.

On the following morning the invalid was much better, though his eyes were swollen and discoloured by the force of the blow which had so nearly cost him his life. He was very anxious to go out, but this I sternly refused to allow.

After lunch it was suggested that it would be a good thing for some of us to ride over to the coffee plantation to see that no damage had been done to the trees, and it was arranged that Harris, the owner, and I should go. As my horse was not available I was given one—a pleasant but very lively little animal—belonging to the place. Thinking I might see some pigeons, and also for purposes of defence, I carried with me a light, single-barrelled shotgun. We rode for about five or six miles, when, coming round a corner, we saw three men on foot barring the way. They were a couple of hundred yards off, and, turning to Harris, I asked him if he knew who they were. He said "No," and added that they probably meant mischief, as they had no right on his property. Putting my quick, eager little horse into a canter I rode up to them, followed by Harris, and, as we approached, I noticed that the middle man was armed with a muzzle-loading gun.

I halted within a yard or two of them and, instinctively feeling that they meant mischief, jumped off my horse, which would not stand. I then asked the armed man what he was doing there, barring our passage. He replied with a rough Spanish oath, and levelling his gun at me pulled the trigger. Fortunately for me it was an old-fashioned percussion-cap weapon and misfired, seeing which, the man drew his knife and ran at me. I fired quickly without bringing the gun up to my shoulder, and the charge of shot struck him clean in the heart. He swayed for a moment and then fell down dead, while the other two rascals took to their heels and ran for their lives. Catching my horse, which was cropping grass at the road-side, I mounted him and, accompanied by Harris, rode back to the village, where we sought out the police magistrate, and telling him what occurred, requested him to return with me and make his depositions.

On arrival at the spot where the man had fallen, I pointed out the exploded cap in the charged gun and the knife which had fallen from the lifeless hands of the man. The official declared himself satisfied, and I then returned to the convent, where I found the doctor dressing the wound in my brother's head.

The news of my encounter had already spread, for the doctor greeted me by saying, "You may count yourself fortunate, for the man you have just shot has to my knowledge killed more than one of his enemies, and none of us thought he would be laid low by a lad like you."

My brother was, of course, full of interest, more especially when we heard later that my assailant was the brother of the man who had so nearly dispatched him to another world. The two Americans, Burns and Dick, returned presently, and were full of congratulations on the escape which Harris and I had had.

In the evening, after dinner, we again discussed the situation, which, we all agreed, was becoming somewhat serious, and I announced my intention of returning with my brother on the following day. I suggested that Harris and the two Americans should accompany us, as it was not safe for them to remain where they were. My advice was agreed to, and we all went off to bed. As I was undressing, my brother, who, as I have already said, slept in the next room to mine, asked me if I had been trying to play a joke on him. I asked him what he meant, to which he replied that on the previous night a figure had leant over his bed, and that he thought it was me trying to frighten him. I told him quietly that I had not moved from my bed; and, on blowing out the light, I reflected with great satisfaction that this was my last night in the gloomy convent of San Geronimo, where both he and I had so nearly lost our lives.

On the following morning we set off betimes, a party of five, each man armed and carrying his weapon at the ready, as we thought we might be attacked. Nor were these precautions wholly unnecessary, for several shots were fired at us from behind the bushes lining the road, and at one spot the villagers gave us a regular fusillade. But their shooting was bad, and fortunately no one was hit. Making good travelling we reached Guatemala on the evening of the second day, just double the time it had taken me to come.

That rapid journey had, however, been too much for my horse Torero, and I was obliged to leave him behind to recuperate.

We found my family naturally alarmed at the happenings at San Geronimo, news of which had already reached the city. They were, however, very relieved to see my brother and me safe and sound, and greatly interested in the story of our adventures.

It was the custom in those days for a ship of war to periodically visit the ports of the Central American Republics, and just at this time my father had been advised that the "Nymph," a small gunboat, was under steam for San José. Amongst other entertainments arranged for the officers was a day's snipe-shooting

in the mangrove swamps of that port, and we started work early one morning. In spite of the intense heat, which had been very burdensome even at that early hour, we had some fine sport with the snipe, but the event of the day was the bagging of a small jaguar by a midshipman. This animal, disturbed from his lair by the movements of our party, ran past this officer, who, with sailor-like promptitude and the optimism of youth, fired at it with No. 8 shot intended for snipe, the smallest of game birds. The charge struck the animal from close quarters on the back of the head and killed him instantly, a remarkable feat of which the youth had every reason to be proud. Many years after, if my memory is correct, this still ardent sportsman was killed in West Africa by a wounded buffalo.

On the following day the officers of the "Nymph" came up to Guatemala, where the customary balls and dinners were given in their honour.

Since the events which had occurred at San Geronimo my father had been advised by the leading English residents in the town of Guatemala that it would be unsafe for me to remain in the Republic, as the family, and more especially the surviving brother of the man I had shot in self-defence, would be certain to try to avenge themselves and attempt my life. It was therefore suggested that I should return to England for a time. This decision was a very welcome one to me, as I was anxious to be on my own and to see more of the world. The "Nymph" was leaving in a day or two, and the commander very kindly offered me a passage in her as far as Panamá, which I was very glad to accept. So bidding farewell to my family, I started off for my adventures in the great world.

CHAPTER VIII

NEW TRAILS

THE voyage was uneventful, and although I enjoyed the experience of living for a time with the Navy, I came to the conclusion that life at sea was altogether too monotonous for my taste, and I certainly had no wish to become a sailor.

From Panamá I travelled with one of the Royal Mail Steamers, whose captain was the father of the present Lord Jellicoe. The "Commodore," as he was called, was a handsome, burly old salt with a big beard, who bore the reputation of being a very fine sailor. He certainly had a very sailor-like flow of language, and was very gallant and attentive to the ladies.

We made a good deal of bad weather on the voyage, and I was glad to land at Southampton, whence I took train to London, where, like Dick Whittington of old, I had sixpence in my pocket and all the world before me.

Beyond the fact that I wanted to do some soldiering, I had no very concrete plans. My father was a poor man, and, with two other brothers and two sisters to provide for, he could not afford to keep me in the militia, which was then the only back-door left open to me for a commission, for I was already over age for Sandhurst.

But fate decided the matter. Shortly after my arrival I received an invitation from General and Mrs. Napier to go and spend some days with them in Hampshire. I accordingly packed up my traps and went down to Oaklands.

The General, a soldier of the old school, was a great martinet, with very early Victorian ideas. On the first night after dinner he asked me if I smoked, and on my pleading guilty, he said grimly, "Come along then," and led me through numerous icy-cold passages to a gloomy servants' hall. Here he left me, saying, "Sit down and make yourself at home."

I did not remain long in my solitude, and the next evening I said that I had no desire to smoke, upon which the old martinet was satisfied with his victory, and did not look so closely when I enjoyed a cigarette in the conservatory. The General, in spite of being nearly seventy, was a good horseman and hunted twice a week on an old hunter which had seen better days. It was with him that I rode to hounds for the first time, and had a good day with the H. H. on a well-bred hireling which carried me

well and only gave me one fall, which was probably more my fault than his.

One day, when my future prospects were being discussed, the General mentioned that he had heard that Colonel Sir Frederick Carrington was looking for likely recruits for his force, the Bechuanaland Border Police, as trouble was expected in Matabeleland, and altogether Africa appeared to offer me the chance I was looking for ; so I accordingly made up my mind to try for the B.B.P., and, armed with a letter of introduction to Sir Frederick Carrington, I got together a few things which I thought would be useful, and set sail for the Cape in one of the Union Castle Line boats.

There were several young men on board, all in quest of adventure, one of whom like myself, was a candidate for the B.B.P. So we were a merry party together. We duly arrived at Cape Town, where, after attending a gay farewell party at the hotel with my late ship companions, I took the train next morning for Vryburg, which was the railway terminus in those days.

Here I caught my first glimpse of a Bechuanaland Border Policeman, and thought him a very splendid sight on his sleek, well-groomed horse. The uniform was a corduroy tunic and breeches, boots and spurs, and a picturesque terra-cotta-coloured slouch hat, with one side of the brim looped up with the letters " B.B.P." in bronze. The pugaree round the hat varied—white, green, yellow, and crimson, according to the troop.

The B.B.P. had been formed after Sir Charles Warren's first military expedition into Bechuanaland, and though called " Police," was, in reality, a pure military force, armed with the Lee-Metford rifle and a long sword bayonet. The men were a picked lot and had to pass somewhat severe tests in riding and shooting.

At Vryburg I discovered that Mafeking, the next station, was the recruiting office, and, not caring to go by bullock wagon, I and a youth called Dand, who had accompanied me, hired horses and a man to take us there.

This was in 1890, and game was then extraordinarily tame and abundant. On either side of the road there were flocks of partridges of various kinds, including the *namaqua*, and all sorts of pigeons and doves. We both had shotguns with us and kept ourselves supplied daily with an abundance of excellent food. We saw several giant bustards, or *pow*, as they are called in Dutch, but these were usually very shy and needed a rifle bullet to bring them down. Herds of springbok were to be seen feeding quietly within range ; and animal life was, in fact, so tame that it eventually led my companion into trouble.

We halted one morning for breakfast at a Dutch farm-house, and Dand thought he would like to warm himself with a stroll with his gun while a dish of bacon and eggs was being got ready. It was a bright, frosty morning, such as is so common and delightful on the veld, and a haze still hung over a small lake not far from the house. I remained warming myself at the fire, chatting with the farmer's wife, for I had already learnt in Central America that courtesy on the part of a traveller never comes amiss, and that, if you want to learn something of the country you are travelling in, every opportunity must be taken to talk to the people you meet. My attentions were, however, interrupted by the sound of firing, single shots at first, these being followed by a regular fusillade, in the midst of which a girl burst into the kitchen crying in Dutch, "He's killing the ducks!" The farmer and his wife rushed off in the direction of the lake, and I after them. We found Dand standing by a little pile of dead domestic ducks, which, as a result of the exuberance of bird-life in the country, he had taken for game ones, and the remainder of the flock were flying wildly about the pond, panic-stricken at the fate of their companions. I don't think I ever saw a man more angry than the farmer. He abused Dand in a string of voluble Dutch oaths, of which "*Verdomde roinek*" ("Cursed redneck") was the eternal refrain. I saw that this morning's sport was going to be costly, and stepped in as peacemaker, suggesting as a preliminary that we should go back to the house for breakfast. This we did, forming a striking procession, consisting of the irate farmer and his wife, myself, and Dand sheepishly carrying a heavy string of fat domestic ducks. I suppose the *wrouw* thought it false economy to waste the breakfast, now cold, and she allowed us to eat it in silence. Then came the reckoning, which, as I had expected, was a heavy one, but there was nothing to do but pay, after which it was a relief to mount and get away from the irate farmer and his wife, who, though well recompensed for their losses, still maintained the burden of their lament.

We arrived at Mafeking that night, and slept in a tin shanty which was dignified by the name of hotel.

On the next morning, dressing myself, as well as my limited wardrobe permitted, I made my way to the Police Camp, where I saw an officer, Lieutenant Williams by name, and told him that I wished to join the force and that I had a letter for Sir Frederick Carrington. Williams said that he would find out if the Colonel could see me. I waited in a state of considerable apprehension for about an hour, when I was ushered into the presence of my future C.O.

Colonel Sir Frederick Carrington was a tallish but broadly

built man of about forty-five, with a heavy, reddish-brown moustache, which entirely covered the lower part of his face. He was handsome and of commanding presence, and looked what he was, a debonair, swashbuckling soldier of fortune.

He received me curtly, asked me one or two questions as to how I had been occupied before coming to Africa, and finally told me that I could present myself for the shooting and riding test on the following morning at 8 a.m. With that I was dismissed and spent the rest of the day hanging about the camp and getting such glimpses as I could of what I hoped was to be my future life. On the following morning I presented myself at the recruiting office, was examined by the doctor and passed sound. Thereupon I and a batch of would-be recruits were marched off to the parade ground, where we were given a few simple tests in horsemanship, such as jumping a fence, getting on and off while in movement. We were then taken to the butts, and fired rounds at a target at varying distances, and then marched back to camp.

Presently a batch of half a dozen men, including Dand and myself, were informed that we were accepted and would leave on the following morning by wagon for Macloutsie. At daybreak we started, a cart drawn by eight oxen conveying our outfits and rations for the journey, while we marched behind it. Not being in uniform we were free to do pretty well as we liked, and I at once began the practice, which I followed during the whole of the march, of taking my shotgun and going off in search of game, while keeping in a parallel line with the cart.

My companions consisted of Dand, who has already been mentioned, and three other men, two of whom were working men, and the third an old soldier named Ross, who had served in the 24th Regiment and had been through the Zulu campaign and present at the battle of Isandhlwana, of which he had many interesting stories to tell. The other members of the party were the driver, a black from the Transvaal, and a small boy, called in Dutch a *voorloper*, whose duty it was to run in front of the oxen and to help to inspan and outspan them. The first part of the journey, which lay over a sandy country sparsely covered with a thin red grass and small bushes, was almost without incident. We rose with the sun, made a fire, and cooked tea and damper, a sort of rough bread made of maize flour mixed with water and toasted on the ashes. No wood was to be had, so we used dry cow-dung for fuel.

From breakfast we trekked till noon, when we outspanned, and had our midday meal, consisting of bully-beef stewed with curry-powder and cooked in the same pot with any birds which I happened to shoot, usually partridges, koran, and pigeons.

After an hour's rest we trekked on till sundown, when we had our evening meal, consisting of cold bully-beef, damper, and tea. The length of the day's journey depended on the distance of one water-hole from another, for the country was arid and the water in these holes was singularly unappetizing, as it was used as a drinking place by oxen and wild animals. Dark green in colour, its taste was so unpleasant that even strongly brewed tea could not disguise it. Not infrequently we found some small animals of the hyena tribe rotting in those pools, and then the taste was well-nigh unbearable.

After four or five days trekking we arrived at Gaberones, a police camp with a garrison of about a hundred men. My cousin, the late Major A. V. Gosling, a very keen soldier, was in command here, and the smartness of his men and horses was a byword in Africa. He had previously been in a cavalry regiment at home, and having gone the pace rather too rapidly had taken service with the B.B.P. He was very kind to me, and, although I was on my way to join the ranks of his corps, invited me to mess with himself and his officers, a particularly agreeable concession after the very rough fare I had been having. I was very much interested by my first glimpse of soldiering up-country, and in the horses, in which my cousin took great pride. The troop had indeed a good-looking lot of animals, in the pink of condition; they were the only horses in the corps to be hog-maned, a fashion which was then, I believe, contrary to the regulations. My cousin, however, maintained that horses looked better and threw better when hogged, and, as the Argentines on the camps use the same argument, it is possible that he may have been right. I had some pleasant rides with him, and enjoyed the change and rest for two days, after which we resumed our march.

From Gaberones onward the country became more interesting and game more plentiful. In addition to partridges, koran and pigeons, I got several guinea-fowl, which were a great addition to our pot, for they are excellent eating. It is remarkable, in regard to this bird, that whereas nearly all birds have changed in their transition from the wild to the domestic state the wild and the domestic guinea-gowl are identical in appearance.

In Africa these birds go in flocks of forty or more, and when pursued they run through the long grass, rising occasionally, when a shot may be obtained. Finally they settle in trees, where they may be bagged for the pot without difficulty. I saw several antelopes, and I succeeded in killing a dykker, one of the smallest of the kind. My first experience of big game was

when a wildebeeste ran across the road, just in front of the wagon, giving me a pleasant and exciting sensation of now being far from the beaten tracks.

Snakes were unpleasantly numerous, and every evening before we laid down our blankets the black driver and the small *voorloper* thrashed the ground all round with their whips. Puff-adders were the commonest enemies, but the equally deadly black mamba was also in evidence. The puff-adder is a most hideous and evil-looking snake, which, when he blows himself out, looks like an elongated toad, for he is very short and squat and is of a repulsive, dirty-looking colour. This snake is said to be specially dangerous in that he strikes backwards and thus takes you unawares. The mamba is a long, graceful, black snake with a deadly poison in its bite. I once had a narrow escape from one. Running after a wounded guinea-fowl, I jumped off from rather a high bank, not looking where I leapt. When in the air I realized that I was descending on a mass of glossy black coils, and my heart almost stopped beating for fear. Fortunately the mamba was as frightened as I was, and darted away as I landed in very close proximity to his dangerous person. I had another adventure with a snake which does very little credit to my nerves. Walking along the road, some little distance behind the wagon, I saw the long grass to the left of me swaying violently as what was apparently a large snake, presumably a boa, made his way through it. I never miss a chance of killing a snake when possible, so fired with my shotgun at where I saw the grass moving. I must have hit the snake, for to my consternation it turned right round and came for me. I had one glimpse of a large, open mouth and sinuous body, and then bolted as hard as I could in the direction of the cart.

Though I have never kept a diary or notes of my many journeys I find that, as a rule, when I think back memory opens its flood-gates, and scenes and happenings which have for years been dormant in my recollection are faithfully reproduced. But lack of notes to which to refer has at times its drawbacks, as in this present instance, when I am about to relate an episode every detail of which is clearly engraved on my memory, but only the name of the place where it occurred is forgotten.

It must, I think, have been after leaving the country of King Kahma and before reaching Selikwe that we halted early one afternoon at a shady spot in the neighbourhood of a native kraal. My companions had gone to look for wood to make a fire, and I, left in charge for the moment of all our belongings, was sitting in the wagon overhauling my gun and kit. I had just opened the case of my guitar, which had been a faithful

though silent companion of my travels, to see if it was intact after all the jolting it had undergone throughout the day's march, when the roads had been more than usually rough, and we had, furthermore, crossed a deep stream. Having satisfied myself as to its condition, I looked up and saw a tall negro standing before me. His dress was scanty and consisted of a faded red soldier's tunic, and on his head a battered top hat. Trousers he had none, and round his middle he wore but a scanty cloth. Seeing me look up, this individual addressed me in English in these words, "God is my friend, the Queen is my friend, you are my friend." I thanked him with a grave courtesy befitting this salutation, and he then asked me what it was I held in my hands. I told him it was an instrument with which to make music and accompany songs. Would I, he said, come to his kraal after sundown and play it to him. I willingly assented to his request, and asked who it was to whom I had the pleasure of speaking, to which he replied that he was the native chief of the place. Then, after pointing out his hut to me, he took his departure; and, our men having returned with a bundle of wood, I set about helping to make the fire and get ready our evening meal. I did not mention my encounter with the chief to my companions, for I feared that they would wish to come with me and possibly spoil what promised to be an interesting evening. As soon, therefore, as our meal was over and the things put away, I stole to the wagon, and getting my guitar, set off for the village, leaving my companions arranging their blankets for the night. On approaching the kraal a man beckoned me to a large circular hut, which I entered. It was very dimly lighted with a wick soaked in oil, aided by a young moon which shone in from the aperture between the thatched roof and the walls. As soon as my eyes became used to the semi-darkness I saw my friend the chief seated on a wooden arm-chair, while on his left, also seated, was a man of somewhat lighter colour with a sparse beard. I learnt later that he was the Counsellor of State. To the right and left of these supreme authorities were seated from twenty to twenty-five women of various ages, clad in a light attire, which consisted of merely a slight girdle round their waists and between their legs. They were the wives of the chief.

Opposite the chief a chair was placed for me facing the audience, while placed on the ground in front of my hosts were several large calabashes filled with Kafir beer, a slightly intoxicating liquor made of millet seed. Smaller calabashes, for use as cups, lay in readiness. There was, I need scarcely say, a perceptible odour of the African human body in the closely



AUTHOR SINGING TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF GUITAR BEFORE ZULU CHIEF
AND WIVES



packed hut, for the night was warm and all were perspiring freely.

I sat down facing my audience and tuning my instrument. I paused for a moment to consider what I should sing. I decided on an old Spanish song, the music of which was reminiscent of the days when the Moors dominated Spain. It seemed to me appropriate, but the effect was different to what I anticipated, for no sooner had I sung a few lines than the women fell into a perfect paroxysm of laughter. They must have thought it irresistibly funny, for they yelled and shrieked at the tops of their voices, and my voice was entirely drowned by their mirth. The chief, on whom my music had apparently a not displeasing effect, was furious at the interruption, and marked his displeasure by hurling the empty calabashes at his wives with such effect that, in a few moments, order was restored.

During all this time the counsellor had sat unmoved, for he apparently knew that it was not correct to laugh, and, at the same time, it was no part of his business to aid in the chastisement of his royal master's hilarious wives. I now recommenced my song and sang it through without interruption, and, though not enthusiastic, my audience seemed, on the whole, pleased with my performance. I followed on with a simple American negro song and a French ditty, and was by this time quite in touch with my audience. Presently the Kafir beer was passed round, and we drank and made merry, while some plug tobacco, which I had brought with me, was handed round and chewed with appreciation. By this time the atmosphere, though somewhat oppressive, was distinctly friendly, and the chief asked me to join him in a hunt the following morning at daybreak, offering to mount me on a pony of his own. As I knew the wagons would not go on till noon, the oxen needing a rest and food, I accepted with alacrity. I then bade my hosts good night, the chief accompanying me to the door of the kraal, and, just as I stepped out, he asked me whether I would not like one of his wives. He seemed a little hurt at my refusal, which he probably attributed to resentment against the ladies for laughing at my songs.

The first streak of dawn had barely appeared when three horsemen rode down to our camp, leading the pony destined for me. We cantered off silently through a small open forest. As it got lighter I distinguished the features of my host of the night before, of his counsellor, and of a third native, whether an attendant or of higher rank I never ascertained, for they made signs for silence. They were well mounted on sturdy Basuto ponies similar to the one I rode myself. Two or three

small deer, scarcely bigger than hares, broke cover, but we paid no attention to them, being after bigger game. Suddenly my eyes were arrested by a movement in the forest, and what a minute before seemed only a part of the brown African tree foliage resolved itself into a tall, graceful giraffe, beautifully coloured, which was browsing leisurely off the top of a young tree. It was off in a flash, but my companions gave no sign. As we emerged from the forest a vast extent of rolling veld appeared before us, and the three men gazed keenly in every direction. Suddenly the chief put spurs to his horse, and we all galloped after him. Far away, lolloping along at what seemed a leisurely pace, was a herd of animals. They had manes and seemed to go very near the ground. Could they be lions, was my first thought, ignorant as I was of the African fauna. "Wildebeeste," said the chief in response to my look of inquiry, and with that we sent our ponies along after them as fast as they could put hoof to the ground. It was a long chase over a perfectly flat country intercepted here and there by bushes of wait-a-bit thorns, which we jumped. The ground was intersected with numerous holes, over which our ponies picked their ways skilfully; but I was far too excited to trouble my head about anything except the quarry, on which we were now beginning to gain perceptibly. The chase must, however, have lasted for fully two hours before we rode them to a standstill, when the leader, a noble bull with a magnificent head of horns, stood at bay, covering the herd. The chief fired first at the bull, which, wounded, attempted to charge, only to fall to a second bullet. My pony was blowing, so I jumped off to get a steady shot, and succeeded in bringing down a young bull. The other two hunters each fired, but only a cow fell to their rifles. In a moment their men were busy cutting up the wildebeeste, after which they sat down to wait for the cart which had been ordered to follow up the hunters.

Meanwhile, our ponies having recovered their winds, the chief and I rode slowly back to the camp, which we reached just as my wagon was preparing to start. I shook my dark friend warmly by the hand, thanking him for his courtesy, and, dismounting, rejoined my companions.

Our next halting-place was at Selikwe, where we spent two days to rest our cattle, one of which was in need of medical attention, for in crossing a stream a crocodile had bitten a piece out of the poor brute's shoulder. I was not present when this happened, but the driver said that the crocodile was so savage that he had to drive it off with his whip. This was a warning to us to be careful about bathing, for the Limpopo, or Crocodile,

River was now running parallel to our route, and we were often tempted to indulge in a refreshing bathe in its pools.

Behind the village of Selikwe were some high chalk cliffs honeycombed with caves, which the natives told me were inhabited by a tribe of large and fierce baboons which, they said, had been known to seize and carry off their women going down for water in the evenings.

The country in this part abounded in feathered game of all kinds, and I kept our pot well supplied. We were thus relieved from the unappetizing monotony of the daily ration of bully-beef.

One day, accompanied by Ross, the old soldier whom I have already mentioned, I was following the bank of the Limpopo when I put up and shot a silver pheasant, the first I had seen. It fell on the opposite side of the river, and after floating down a little way with the current it got caught in an overhanging bush. I was eager to get this prize, and Ross and I drew lots with two pieces of grass as to who should act as retriever. This was sporting of him, for he was a much older man than myself and thoroughly realized the danger from crocodiles. I lost, and asking him to cover me with his rifle I jumped in, got my bird and was back again in record time. It is a most unpleasant feeling swimming in alligator- or crocodile-haunted waters, and though in later years I have done it many times, I never lost the creepy sensation that one has down one's spine on these occasions. The silver pheasant went into the pot with a guinea-fowl or two which I picked up on our way back, and as we ate our stew Ross told the tale of my swim.

We had now travelled over a thousand miles, and were nearing the end of our journey. We outspanned a few miles outside Macloutsie to get a wash and change of clothes, and I, wishing to make a good impression on my new companions, dressed myself in a smart blue suit, brown shoes, and a straw hat, a get-up which was doubtless somewhat incongruous in a military camp in the heart of Africa. The soldiers were quick to see this and equally quick to bestow on me a nickname which clung to me during my days of soldiering. It was "Margate."

On arrival at Macloutsie we were at once taken over by a smart corporal, who marched us up to the orderly room, and, after a few questions put by the officer of the day, we were marched off again, given our uniform and accoutrements, and posted to our various troops, which was, in my case, to G troop. Then to show us that soldiering with the B.B.P. was not a life of ease, we were put to fatigue duty until 12 p.m., when canteen sounded and I went up and took my regulation "tot" of "Cape

smoke." After this came dinner at once, then another fatigue, then stables, followed by tea, bed, and lights out at nine o'clock. I was very tired and slept soundly in the cot which had been allotted me in a hut containing about twenty-five men.

CHAPTER IX

SOLDIERS OF THE QUEEN

AS I have already related, the British Bechuanaland Police Force had been organized, and was commanded, by Sir Frederick Carrington, K.C.M.G., a distinguished soldier who had served under Sir Charles Warren, and had since carved out for himself a career in South Africa. He was a striking-looking man of medium height, with a determined face.

The men of the Force had many stories about him—some probably apocryphal—of his riding and shooting, of his gallantries, of his prowess with the bottle, as well as of his pride in the B.B.P., which he had raised and now commanded. Whenever he had some distinguished visitor from England or the Cape as his guest we heard that a night alarm would be given to show how smartly the troops would turn out and display their readiness as a frontier force for any attack of the Matabele from across the border. According to the men, "Freddy" always made a heavy bet with his guest, after the wine had circulated freely at dinner, as to the number of minutes we would take to get under arms, and won it, because our "non-coms" usually gave us a pretty broad hint of what was coming some hours beforehand. We certainly cursed our colonel's friends for interrupting our slumbers so frequently, but it was good training and nobody really minded.

Carrington was a bold horseman and would frequently lead the Force in a cross-country gallop over the veld, taking the wait-a-bit thorn bushes as they came, for the trained horses knew too much about them not to jump clean.

As, however, "horse-sickness" claimed about ninety per cent. of our animals every year we seldom had trained horses for long, and our cross-country gallops on remounts proved somewhat exciting and often resulted in broken arms and legs.

Second in command was Major Goold-Adams, who later had a brilliant career in the African Civil Service. The rest of the officers were men of the regular army who, attracted by the life or for pecuniary reasons, had exchanged from their home regiments to see service in Africa. Captains "Charlie" Coventry Sitwell, and Phipps—known as "Mad Jack"—were some of the seniors, and "Miss" Marsham, "Lobster" Munroe, and "Fatty" Williams some of the juniors. The nicknames quoted are those bestowed on them by the men.

The non-commissioned officers were nearly all regulars. Our regimental sergeant-major, Wagstaff, had been in the Navy, and a very smart man he was, but with an extremely choleric temper. Gibson was another sergeant of whom I shall have more to say later on, and Pyke was the sergeant drill instructor. The Force was composed almost entirely of time-expired old soldiers of the cavalry with a sprinkling of gentlemen, many of whom were family failures. A few others, like the men I had been travelling with from Mafeking, were emigrants of the working classes who had failed to make a living in Africa.

As a whole, it was a rough, rather swashbuckling crowd, who looked the part in the picturesque uniform and rakish hat with upturned brim. They mostly drank what they could get, and were always spoiling for any kind of a fight.

Each troop had a separate hut for sleeping, and also a separate mess hut, where we were provided with sound and very fairly cooked food. Beef was the staple dish, but often, when the officers had been out shooting, we had our share of koodoo meat, which was not unlike beef in taste. On Sundays the men were allowed to go out after game with their service rifles, provided they paid for the ammunition used, a very sensible arrangement which encouraged good marksmanship. Twice a week—Wednesdays and Sundays—we had suet pudding with sugar, which the men called “duff,” and to which we looked forward greatly as a relief from a somewhat monotonous diet.

The routine of the day was as follows: Réveillé sounded at 4.30, and at 5 we had stables, which meant grooming our horses for an hour and a half; then breakfast, followed either by a parade or a fatigue, which kept us busy till the bugle sounded canteen at 12.30, followed by dinner at 1 o'clock. At 2.30 the recruits turned out for drill for an hour to an hour and a half, after which we were free till 4.30, when stables again sounded, followed by canteen at 5.30 and tea. After that we were mostly so tired that we were glad to get to bed. There was a good deal of rough horseplay in the dormitories, which often merged into bullying and of which, of course, the recruits—“rookies,” as we were called—were the principal butts. This often made sleep or rest impossible till the welcome bugle sounded “lights out.”

I don't suppose recruit's drilling is ever very pleasant for a gentleman ranker, and I dare say the process of licking us into shape in the heart of Africa was even rougher than it would have been at home. Sergeant Pyke was not indeed a lovable person in any sense of the word, and it was obvious that he enjoyed to the full the autocratic power which he wielded over us. We

were all anxious, for obvious reasons, to learn and get it over, and some of us, no doubt, did better than others ; but we were all equally cursed. The fact, too, that we drilled at about the hottest time of the day did not improve our own or the instructor's tempers. Pyke was often very abusive, and I doubt if any old-time Prussian "non-com" could have been more so. I recollect one occasion when he made us do the bayonet thrust till our arms ached so that we could hardly hold the heavy Martini and sword bayonets. "Points up!" he shouted at me. "Call that a thrust!" and he proceeded to express his contempt in language too lurid for repetition. My travelling companion, Ross, drilled on my right. Being an old soldier of the 24th Regiment he knew infantry but not cavalry drill. Pyke seemed to take this as a personal affront, and one day when Ross made some trifling mistake the sergeant caught hold of his nose. Now this was going too far and the old soldier knew it, for he said between his clenched teeth and so low that perhaps only I and the other man next to him heard it, "Sergeant, if you do that again I'll put my bayonet through you." Pyke left him alone after that.

It was a happy moment when the adjutant came down and put us through our exercises, while the sergeant stood meekly by, and still more happy when I heard that I and a number of others had passed out, and were no longer "rookies" but "pucka" soldiers.

The B.B.P. was well mounted on horses brought from the Transvaal, the Cape, and from the Orange Free State, but during the rainy season "dikkop," a fatal form of sickness, played havoc with them and literally decimated their numbers. These losses were made good by constant purchase of remounts, which were usually half broken animals, full of buck. Some of them were quite wild animals that would not allow one even to touch them, and I was once given one of these to groom at "stables." He had barely been handled, and his long coat was full of ticks. After an hour's hard work with brush and curry-comb I had got him fairly clean with the exception of the ungetatable parts round his tail and hind-legs, where some of these insects still clung. The sergeant-major, going his round of inspection, spotted this, asked me why I had not cleaned the animal properly, and told me to pull out the ticks at once. I obeyed somewhat flurriedly, and the horse let fly with both heels, getting me in the stomach, so that I fell to the ground in agony. I had to be carried off and laid on my cot, where, with the aid of a stiff tot, I recovered after a while.

Those of the recruits who had no previous experience with

horses had a pretty rough time handling these remounts, which must have been a veritable nightmare to them. One of those unfortunates was a man called Birkbeck. Why he ever joined the police was a mystery to all of us, for he was round-shouldered, effeminate, and in every way unsuited to the life. Moreover, he was one of those men who, try as he would, could never learn to ride, for he was terrified at anything on four legs. The indifferent riders, in addition to recruit drill, had to do riding school every day, and this was Birkbeck's *via dolorosa*. Every epithet, every insult which long experience and a copious vocabulary could devise were shouted at him by the riding master. This he said when he was in a good temper, "Now, Birkbeck, sit up; you weren't brought down 'ere to look ugly," or "Poor bloody 'oss, you've given 'im a sick 'eadache." Birkbeck was put on "quiet 'uns" and also on "bad 'uns," but the result was always the same, for he never remained in the saddle more than a few seconds. Once he was sent on parade and promptly thrown as the squadron started to trot. He was hopeless, and his life was made a burden to him. In the end he did a clever thing, which redeemed him. Being stable orderly for the day, in addition to the troop horses he was in charge of a dozen remount mules which had just come up. They were as wild as hawks and as free with their heels as with their teeth, and Birkbeck trembled at the very sight of them. The duty of stable orderly for the day is to look after, feed, and water the animals, and to keep the stables clean. Birkbeck solved the feeding question in his mind by throwing a bundle of hay at the mules, while he kept the stalls clean with a long-handled broom which enabled him to keep within safe distance of their heels. But the serious difficulty was watering them. In order to do this he had to go into the stalls, untie each animal in turn, and lead it down to the pool nearby. At twelve o'clock the officer of the day, who happened to be Captain Phipps—otherwise known as "Mad Jack"—came on the scene and, struck by the tucked-up appearance of the mules, said, "Stable orderly, take them out first to water," and having given this order he took up a position outside to watch the fun. Birkbeck, in an agony of apprehension, considered for a moment, and then decided on action. He went into the stall of the mule which he thought to be the least ferocious of the dozen, untied it, and led it to water, then took the animal back to the stable and returned with it twelve times to water; when "Mad Jack" remarked, "Stable orderly, the first mule drank heavily, but the others didn't seem thirsty," he merely made a non-committal reply, "Yes, sir." The story got about, and the men, delighted at Birkbeck's cunning in outwitting the

officer, left him in peace from that day, and he was finally given a job in the tailor's shop which suited him far better than active soldiering.

These were the days of pipeclay and polish in the British Army, and though we were irregular troops in South Africa we had our full share of it. Preparing for guard mounting was a specially strenuous business, for buttons, bayonets, and spurs had to be burnished, and boots and straps polished to the nines. I soon found out that the most satisfactory way was to get an old soldier who had done this work all his life to turn one out at the cost of half-a-crown, for then one could face the inspection without a tremor.

At guard mounting competition was very great, as the cleanest man was dismissed and given a soft job on the following day, such as grazing-guard, when one could lie about on the veld, one's only care being to prevent the troop horses from straying. Being dismissed from guard mounting was, oddly enough, called "getting the stick," and competition for this honour was very keen. Once another man and I were about equal in the amount of polish bestowed on our get-up, and the officer made us hold up our feet to see if the spur-straps under the boot were blackened. Mine were and his were not, so I "got the stick."

Some of the new recruits were very lazy as to preparing for guard mounting, and I recollect one who appeared for inspection with his great-coat on his arm instead of being tightly rolled and slung over his shoulder according to regulation. He only got as far as the sergeant, who, too horrified to be abusive, asked the delinquent if he thought he was "going to the bloody opera."

Three men and a corporal constituted the guard, whose duties were from sunset to sunrise. One slept for three hours and then had two hours sentry-go. If you were lucky and got the third turn, say from 10 to 12 p.m., it was by no means unpleasant to pace your post in the coolness of the African night.

The words of the sentry's challenge, which must date back far into history, always gave me pleasure, "Halt, who goes there?" "Friend." "Advance one and give the counter-sign." This given, the reply was, "Pass, friend, all's well," a phrase which sounded pleasantly over the stillness of the veld.

"Visiting rounds," or the officer's inspection of the guard, generally came off before 12 a.m. When he appeared, one halted him in rather a truculent tone, for it was pleasant to order one's officer about; on his reply "Visiting rounds" being given, the sentry shouted, "Guard turn out," presented arms, and gave over his "orders," which were an account of the various duties he had to perform.

"Visiting rounds" once over it was generally safe to smoke a pipe or cigarette. One evening when the moon was at the full I saw a strange sight when doing sentry-go. A koodoo bull with magnificent antlers ran past me followed by a pack of wild dogs. He passed so close that I could hear the sobbing intake of his breath as he strained to escape his pursuers, for he was nearly done and the dogs, running mute, were closing on him at every step. These gaunt, silent hounds, with red, hanging tongues, were horribly clear and distinct in the light of the moon, and I was much tempted to fire a shot at them. The hunted koodoo must have purposely run into what he knew to be the habitation of man for protection from his pursuers, but man was sleeping, and I, alone awake, was unable to help him as I wished to do. I found his bones the next day, where the wild dogs had pulled him down about a mile from the camp.

When I had served for some months night guard became a more responsible job, for in addition to my usual duties as sentry I had to mount guard over a Zulu condemned to death for murder. Like most of his race he was a fine-looking, upstanding savage, and, feeling sorry for the man, I used to give him surreptitiously tobacco and other prohibited delicacies. One day when I had thus gained his confidence he told me his story in a simple and almost child-like way. "You see, baas," he said, "it was like this. I had been hunting in the veld and got lost, and was for three days and nights without food or water. On the morning of the fourth day I came upon a Bechuana kraal where there was a bowl of milk in the hut. I asked for it and the man refused me, whereupon I, of course, killed him and his wife and family. Why not? The Bechuanas are only dogs anyhow."

My friend was hanged some time later in presence of the troops. As he mounted the ladder the soldier who was to adjust the fatal noose offered him a pannikin of rum. "No," said the Zulu resolutely. "I not a white man. I not frightened to die." And these were his last words.

The old soldiers had, as a rule, their own horses which nobody else rode, but this was not the case with the younger soldiers, who were told what to ride by the troop sergeant on the evening before parade. This very often meant an unpleasant and tricky mount. I had one or two of this sort given me, and, with the confidence of youth, succeeded in managing them so well that I was soon marked down as a fair rider. This tribute to my horsemanship had its compensations as well as its disadvantages. One day I was ordered by the troop sergeant to ride a mare on parade which was usually ridden by a sergeant named Gibson, who was a poor horseman and had recently made rather an

exhibition of himself on parade while riding this same animal, a good-looking, spirited nag that only wanted a little humouring. She went kindly with me, and as a result I was told that I might ride her until further orders. This encouragement, however gratifying, I knew meant trouble with her former proprietor. Nor was I mistaken, for a day or two later, as I was crossing the barrack square, I met Sergeant Gibson, who ordered me to come to his tent and fetch his saddle to clean. I took it to my hut and having spent more than an hour in soaping and polishing it brought it back spotless and so shiny that you could see your face in it. The sergeant, however, after glancing at my work said that it was in a "filthy state" and ordered me to take it back and do it properly. I brought the saddle back in an hour, when he swore at me and called me a "dirty lazy young swine." As the soldiers say, "he had me set," and I knew it. But the only thing was to do my work as well as possible and not to worry. At this time a relay of remount mules were driven into camp and I and a fellow-trooper named Charlie Andersen were told off to take two of them out for exercise. Andersen and I had become rather friendly, as he had spent some time in the Argentine, and we used to get together and chat over old times. But he, too, for some trifle or other, had fallen under the ban of the sergeant and we were companions in misfortune. Though no rough-riders we knew enough of the business to get the mules down to the deep sand in the river-bed, and, tying a ten-foot rope round their necks and blindfolding them, we mounted. Only a very good rough-rider can sit a bucking mule, and we were both thrown off several times, but, as they stopped to graze after getting rid of their riders, we soon caught them again, and after a few days they were, to our great relief, sufficiently handled to be put into harness to draw the seven-pounder guns.

For some time there had been rumours in camp as to the prospect of an advance of our force into Matabeleland to take the field against King Lobengula. Some days later great excitement was caused in camp by the sudden dispatch of four men under Corporal Scofield to the Matabele frontier to report on the movements of these natives. Three days after their departure a heliograph message was flashed into Macloutsie by the corporal, stating that his patrol had been attacked and fired on by the Matabele, and that he and his men were returning with all speed to Macloutsie. I was watching the signals myself when the message came in, and saw it taken down by the non-commissioned officer on signal duty.

The garrison of Fort Macloutsie was almost entirely cut off from news of the outer world; letters took from two to three

months, and we were therefore almost entirely ignorant of what was going on in the political world. At the time of these happenings, however, Cecil Rhodes, convinced that Germany had planned to add Matabeleland to her young colonial empire, determined to seize it himself. The arrogance of Lobengula, his refusal to allow white men into his country, and the turbulence of his warriors gave an easy excuse for the fulfilment of Rhodes' ambition. The supposed attack on Corporal Scoffield's patrol was therefore a put-up job, but it served its purpose, and ten days later war was officially declared on the Matabele.

The excitement in our garrison may easily be imagined. The monotony of our life was suddenly changed. There were no more parades; sergeants and "non-coms" ceased worrying us, and the whole talk was of active service—words which to me had a magic sound.

A few weeks previous to this four Maxim guns—then a brand-new invention—had been sent to Macloutsie, and I now found myself posted as lead-driver on one of these guns, while my friend Andersen was wheel-driver on the same team, the Maxims being drawn by four horses. This was the first occasion when these guns were used in warfare.

We were soon at our task getting the horses used to their work, fitting their harness; seeing to our own uniforms and accoutrements, and having our bayonets sharpened.

At last the wished-for moment arrived, and one morning at sunrise we filed out of Fort Macloutsie, men, horses, and guns forming an imposing array.

CHAPTER X

ACTIVE SERVICE

SOME weeks before leaving Macloutsie a Zambesi boy arrived in camp one day and offered me his services. It may seem rather strange that a trooper in the police should need a servant, but I thought that one would be useful to me and, as the wages asked were modest—namely, ten shillings a month—I engaged him, christened him “Charlie” and set to work teaching him his duties. This was by no means easy, for he was a perfectly untutored savage and spoke neither English, Dutch, nor Kafir. It was therefore necessary for me to pick up a working vocabulary of his own Zambesi dialect, which abounded in syllables interspersed with loud clicks, which I found considerable difficulty in pronouncing. I soon learnt enough, however, to make myself understood, and when words failed made signs to him, so that we understood each other fairly well. My servant was, I suppose, about twenty years of age when he came to me. In his boyhood he had been captured by the Matabele in one of their forays, and had been held a slave for a number of years until he succeeded in escaping and reaching British territory. All his front teeth were missing, and he explained to me that the Matabele marked all their captives by knocking out their teeth with the back of an axe. It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that Charlie showed the greatest hatred of his former masters, and his animosity was, I imagined, only equalled by his fear of them. I was therefore not a little surprised when he volunteered to accompany me on this expedition, the more so as all the other camp boys ran away when the news of impending hostilities became known. I think that he had immense confidence in the virtues of the Maxim gun. There was only one question that troubled Charlie, and that was the form of his payment. On this point he was decidedly particular, as I discovered when the first instalment of his monthly salary became due. A gold half-sovereign he scorned, and four half-crowns were almost as useless in his eyes. No, what he required was that his ten shilling wage should be paid to him in “tickies,” that is, in threepenny bits, and to obtain these from a grumbling canteen sergeant was a work of no small difficulty. I had therefore to explain to my servant that I could not engage myself to meet his wishes in this matter during the campaign, and that he would have to trust me to pay him when and how I could.

This conversation was not by any means as fluent as it appears in print, for my meaning was eked out with many signs, gesticulations, clicks, and a repetition of the word *lapa*, which means "far away," and was, it seemed to me, both expressive and suitable to the occasion. We were, indeed, going far away and the prospects of Charlie's pay seemed also somewhat uncertain. He made no difficulties, however, and as No. 1 Maxim gun trotted out of Macloutsie a wild-looking figure with only a cloth round his waist for clothing kept step with the lead horse, on which his master sat.

The horses for the Maxims were selected from the best available, and my mount in the lead was a good, upstanding brown, not without a dash of blood. His name was Danger, which seemed to indicate that his character was not of the best, but hard work and short commons soon reduced his superfluous energy and he became as quiet as a lamb.

Behind me on the shaft horse sat my friend Charles Andersen, with whom, when the road was clear, I would occasionally chat in Spanish; but one had mostly to keep one's eyes attentively fixed on the veld to avoid, as far as possible, lumps and holes, for in the gun-carriage, which was springless, sat a corporal, Dawson by name, and another trooper, and their language, when badly jolted, became vehement and unprintable. I soon discovered that the work of a driver of a gun was much harder than that of a trooper, who could ride along at his ease, his rifle in its bucket, and nothing to think about on the march. We, on the contrary, had to be on the qui vive all the time, riding one and driving the off horse, while when we halted we had not only two horses to groom but harness as well as saddlery to clean.

But in spite of all this it was delightful to be out of Macloutsie, and I was assuredly not the least happy of the thousand men who camped that first night under the stars and eagerly devoured their ration of damper and bully-beef. After the meal there was much surmise and talk of our plans and of the enemy. We knew that the Matabele, an offshoot of the Zulu race, were hardy fighting men, and that they were sure to put up a struggle. We knew, too, that they were extremely cruel, and that any of us who fell into their hands alive might expect an extremely unpleasant death. Talking over these things, an old soldier who had seen much service said to me, "You will find active service means hard work—much harder than you ever had in camp. The only time you're resting is when you're fighting." I never forgot these words, for I found them to be the truth.

On the second day our scouts reported having seen isolated natives in the bush and shrub, and in the evening a strange thing

happened. A man, an old soldier—I don't give his name, though I remember it well—after being posted at rather an isolated spot as sentry, returned in a short while to camp, saying he could not remain there. He was, of course, immediately put under arrest, and the next day he appeared before the colonel, who with good sense and moderation decided to return him to duty without punishment. He told the prisoner, however, that if his misconduct was repeated he would be court martialled for cowardice before the enemy, and for that the penalty was death. We remained in camp for another day, and at sunset "Darkie," for that was his nickname, was once more posted as sentry on the same spot, a hill some distance from the camp. After our evening meal I was sitting chatting over the fire when a single shot rang out, which caused no small commotion in camp, for we were believed to be in touch with the enemy. But in a few moments the cause of the alarm was explained by two men bringing in the body of the sentry. Afraid to remain at his post, he yet had had the resolution to take his own life by pulling the trigger of his rifle with his toe. Death had been instantaneous, and after burying him the next morning without honours we struck camp and proceeded on our march in the direction of Tati.

At midday we were joined by a small party of British South African Police, an irregular colonial force under the command of a certain Commandant Raaf, a Dutchman who had rendered service to the British cause in the first Boer war in 1881. For this service he was rewarded with a C.B., which, as his trade was that of a butcher, was scarcely of much value to him in peacetime. To mark his sense of the honour, he had the following signboard painted and displayed over his shop at Kimberley: "J. Raaf, C.B., Butcher."

The Commandant had the reputation of being a good colonial fighter, but something—we knew not what—had displeased him, and there was strong friction between him and Goold-Adams, who now commanded the B.B.P. One night we heard a great commotion and shouting in his quarters, and matters must have been brought to a head, for the following morning he left us, riding south, and we never saw him again.

On our arrival at the Shashi River we were joined by another ally in King Khama and about five hundred of his soldiers, armed only with spear and knobkerries, and on the following day a grand review was held in the sandy bed of the river. It was really a magnificent spectacle to see these dusky warriors, drawn up in martial array, perform various evolutions with their assagais, during which they simulated the greatest ferocity, and one

wondered if any Matabele spies were peering at them through the bush. If so, however, they must have laughed to themselves, for it was not long before we discovered that the Bechuana were far from warlike by nature and that their ferocity speedily evaporated when face to face with the enemy. An order to the force to salute King Khama was very unpopular with our men, but it was, no doubt, wise and politic. I, for my part, whenever I saw His Majesty, gave him the smartest salute which an African monarch could desire.

After breaking camp at Tati we moved on with considerable precautions, which were further increased as we reached the Matoppos Hills, where, one evening, our patrols captured two enemy spies, an old and a young man. Brought before our colonel and asked by an interpreter what they were doing, they replied boldly that they were observing the white *impi*. Where was their own *impi*? was the next question put to them, to which they answered nothing. They were told they had five minutes to reply or be shot. "Shoot us," they said, and it was done. It was clear that we had to deal with a gallant foe.

The next event that I remember occurred one morning at about eleven o'clock, while we were on the march. Suddenly the bushes on our right parted and a white man on horseback appeared. He was roughly clad in corduroys and riding boots, with a broad-brimmed hat shading his refined and intellectual face, which was set off by a brown pointed beard and a full moustache. It was Selous, the great hunter and naturalist, who had come to guide us into the country which he had so often traversed alone, and which only he and perhaps two or three other white men knew. Selous was then, I suppose, between thirty and forty and not so well known to fame as he afterwards became.

My first introduction to the great hunter was under the following circumstances. Since the start of the expedition both men and officers had been in the habit of bathing in the pools of the dried-up rivers, though we knew it was not altogether safe to do so. As a matter of fact, we ought to have been more careful, for our adjutant, who was sunning himself on a partially submerged rock after his dip, had a huge piece of his backside bitten out by a crocodile, and the wound was so serious that he had to be invalided back to Macloutsie. But we did not pay much attention to this, for he was a very unpopular officer, and we were grateful to the crocodile for ridding us of him. A wag amongst us even stated that the poor beast had been found dead, some way down the river, with the adjutant's flesh clenched firmly between his teeth and a look of dreadful agony on his face. So the

bathing still continued without our taking any precautions, and on one occasion, when I had just finished my bathe, Selous came up to me and said, "If you had seen as many men taken by crocodiles in these pools as I have, you would be more careful how you ventured in these waters." This remark, coming from a man of his reputation and experience, really did strike home, and I thanked Selous for his advice, which I made a vow to follow.

On the following day, however, it was conveyed to me in an even more forcible fashion, for, after about a dozen men had bathed in a large pool, Selous again appeared and dropped a dynamite stick into the muddy waters. After the explosion, the convulsion and heaving-up of the waters continued for some minutes, until presently a large crocodile, stunned by its force, came to the surface. This made the bathers look foolish, and we were all more careful for the future.

Another recollection which I have of Selous was seeing him riding a bucking horse with the handle of an axe in his whip hand. The great hunter was a somewhat rough, but determined, horseman, and the animal, finding the axe handle rather more than he bargained for, soon gave up bucking and went like a lamb.

We had now settled down to steady marching in the direction of Bulawayo, which was our goal, but our comfort was much interfered with by the fact that the rainy season had set in, and, what was even more serious, that our provisions had run short so that the entire force was placed on half rations. These were two decided handicaps to the pleasure of campaigning. Rain during the daytime when on the march was bearable, for we had our cavalry cloaks, which kept us warm and comparatively dry; but at night it was the very devil, for we had no tents or even trees to give us shelter. A favourite dry spot was under the few wagons that accompanied the expedition, but this luxury was not for the young troopers, and we had to make the best of it in the open. I found that the driest way was to make one's "doss" on a sloping ground so that the water did not settle under one. Then with the aid of four sticks, I made a roof with one of my army blankets, and, covering myself with the other and my cloak, I managed to keep fairly dry and get some sleep. Charlie soon learned to rig up my shelter himself, and a native fire composed of a couple of sticks, which, protected by a bank of big stones, gave some degree of warmth for nearly the whole night. African natives are wonderfully clever at making these fires, over which they sit dozing half the night, and they laugh at the white man's cheerful bonfire, which, they say, is so hot that he cannot get near enough to enjoy it. Sometimes we had

wind as well as rain, and then my improvised tent would, of course, blow down and one had to spend a sleepless and very uncomfortable night, longing for a cup of hot tea and a tot of rum to restore one's circulation in the morning.

Our half rations consisted of a half-pound tin of bully-beef per day and maize meal, which we used as "pap," a porridge eaten without sugar. A very small ration of flour was issued, and this we used for making "damper," that is, mixing it with water and cooking it over the embers of the fire. We were divided into messes of about twelve men each, and the most likely ones among us were selected as cooks. I was cook for my mess, and gave, I was assured, great satisfaction in that capacity owing to my attempts at variety. Fortunately there was only one warm meal—at midday—and I generally managed to stew up the bully-beef in a more or less palatable way. Charlie was of considerable assistance to me in preparing food, and as I had by now got to understand his language fairly well the relations between master and man gradually became more intimate. He expressed the greatest desire to come to close quarters with the Matabele, and boasted of what he was going to do when that time came. One day, when we were talking together, he asked me why I was not an officer, "for," said he, "you must be the son of an *inkos*" (chief), and I thought it strange that a primitive savage should be able to distinguish the difference in social grades. His one absorbing interest lay in my Maxim gun, which I had told him fired two hundred shots a minute, and he longed for the moment for it to come into action. I had my misgivings as to Charlie's courage, and expected, when that time came, he would disappear into hiding. Events proved, however, that I was quite wrong.

After passing through the Matoppo Hills, where we were in hourly expectation of an attack, we merged into a thickly wooded country where game was plentiful; we even heard lions roaring at night not far from our camp.

Owing to the relative smallness of our numbers guard duty was very hard, and every third night one was put on sentry-go, which was not a very agreeable ending to a long day's work. In addition to the sentries about the laager, mounted men were stationed at some distance away in the veld. These were known as "Cossack Posts," but the men, with whom the job was decidedly unpopular, gave it a somewhat similar but less polite-sounding name. It was in fact not pleasant, perhaps on a dark and rainy night, to find yourself in some isolated spot, sitting motionless on your horse and expecting every moment an assagai between your ribs. Every time your horse cocked his ears at

some sound in the bush you wondered how it would feel. These apprehensions were not altogether without reason, for we had recently come across the body of one of our men who had been captured and crucified between two saplings by the enemy, and we knew that any prisoner taken alive would have a very unpleasant exit from this world. Later, one of our officers, a Mr. Williams, was captured alive, his horse having bolted and carried him into the Matabele ranks, and he too met with a similar death. Another favourite method of torture which the Matabele frequently inflicted on their Mashona slaves was to strip the wretched man naked and oil his body. After this his eyelids were cut off and he was pegged down over a nest of black ants. The wretched victim was thus slowly eaten alive by the ants, attracted in myriads by the oil, and was unable even to close his eyes against the fierce rays of the sun. We came across one young Mashona boy whose lips had been cut away and heard from him the following account of his mutilation: He had been one of Lobengula's personal servants, and on one occasion, when carrying a calabash of Kafir beer to the king, temptation came over him and he tasted the beverage. A spy who saw the act reported him to Lobengula, and the boy was called up for judgment. The sentence was that the lips which had presumed to touch the royal cup should be cut off, and it was carried out there and then.

For two days we travelled through a very dry and arid country, and only found water at night when we camped. We were ordered to fill our water-bottles at starting and only to drink in small sips, but of course we were much too thirsty to obey. Relief came in a strange way, for we passed several Mashona villages, where the women came out and sold us for a "ticky," i.e. threepence, large calabashes of a thin, sweetish-tasting milk. It was *human* milk, and we were most of us glad indeed to get it. This dry country was, however, soon passed, and we did not again suffer from lack of water. Our monotonous food of mealy-pap and bully-beef was also now changed for something more palatable, for we came upon large herds of enemy cattle, oxen, goats, and a few sheep, and these were seized, and after proportioning a sufficient amount for the troops the remainder was sent down country to be sold. We were glad when we made a big haul, for the proceeds of the sale were to be divided up according to rank, and every man was to have his share. I think we deserved it too, for our work was certainly hard enough. After the day's march, when we outspanned for the night, as soon as the horses were seen to, a spade was put into one's hand, and we had to dig a large trench round the camp as a precaution against a night

attack. There was one very unpleasant side in digging up this virgin soil in Matabeleland, for in it a most noisome insect had its abode. Its name was aptly enough "stink ant," and when cut in two or otherwise mutilated by the spade gave forth a most appalling and filthy odour of human excrement. It was so bad that when I laid down in my blankets tired out the strong stench kept me from sleeping. Moving the earth also brought other undesirable crawling things from their nests, and one night, feeling something creeping over my face, I brushed it away instinctively in my sleep. I was soon awake, however, for it was a scorpion, which had stung me just over the left eye, causing most acute pain. For some time my eye was so swollen that I could not see out of it, and the poison caused an attack of fever, which, however, subsided after a few days.

I regretted very much that on leaving Macloutsie I had not taken with me a supply of fish-hooks and a line or two, for according to Charlie the rivers and streams were all supplied with fish. Chance, however, one day put me in possession of the necessary equipment. One morning as a looted herd of goats was being proportioned out among the messes I noticed a particularly fat kid, and asked Andersen to try to secure it for our mess, which he was successful in doing. In skinning the animal I noticed that a fish-hook had been stuck through its male organ, for the purpose, no doubt, of preventing it from breeding. As soon as the kid was cut up and boiling in the big, three-legged pot I quickly improvised a coarse line, baited the hook with a piece of meat, and cast it into the stream nearby with that thrill of expectation that every fisherman knows. I had not long to wait: in a minute or two I felt a tug and hauled out a good-sized catfish with long whiskers, and in a few moments I had five of these on the bank. No one had seen me, for the men were lying down resting, so I decided to cook a *bouille-baisse* for my mess. Skinning the fish and cutting them up, I put them in the pot to boil along with the kid. Then having no vegetables with which to flavour, I went a few yards into the bush and soon found a wild verbena bush. I plucked a handful of the leaves and added them to my stew, which was quickly disposed of by twelve hungry men who were well satisfied with the efforts of their cook. With my single hook I caught a number more of these fish, which supplied us with a wholesome change of diet, until at last a big fish broke my line and ran away with it. So my fishing was at an end.

The spot where this happened remains clear in my memory, not only owing to the fishing, but on account of a very unpleasant night we spent. I turned into my blankets early, glad that some-

one else was doing sentry-go, and was soon fast asleep, when suddenly, at about 1 a.m., the bugle sounded the alarm. The notes of this call have a particularly melancholy sound, more especially when one is unexpectedly aroused from one's slumbers. In a few moments we were standing to our arms, shivering in the cold of the early morning and every moment expecting an attack. But, after waiting some time, nothing happened, and we were told that a nervous sentry, deceived by shadows of his own imagining, had fired off his rifle and thus wantonly disturbed our slumbers. That sentry did not belong to my troop, but it was understood that things were not made pleasant for him for the next few days by his comrades. This spot was, aptly enough, officially named "Fort Funk."

So far we had not come into contact with our enemy, and many of us began seriously to doubt whether we ever should. But it is always the unexpected which happens, and one day as our line of troops was slowly defiling along the road, the men sitting easy and chatting as they rode, we were suddenly again aroused by the bugle sounding the alarm, and the column suddenly sprang to the alert. My gun, which was guarding our rear, was ordered to the front, and springing my horses into a gallop we left the road and dashed across the veld. Passing the troops which were at the trot, we galloped along at a smart pace over tree stumps and roots, shaking the occupants of the springless gun-carriages in such a way that they could hardly keep their seats.

In a few moments the cause of the alarm was apparent. One of the foremost wagons containing spare arms and equipment had been attacked by the Matabele and set fire to, while one of our corporals, a man named Munday, lay dead on the road with the native driver beside him. They had both been speared with assagais and death was instantaneous. The wagon and most of its equipment was totally destroyed. It was clear that someone had blundered, for the wagon should never have been so far distant from the troops as to make this occurrence possible, and it was only fortunate that our losses were not greater. The affair had one advantage, however, in that it served to make our officers more careful, and henceforth every precaution was taken to prevent our being taken by surprise.

Our commissariat had, since the start of the expedition, been rather unsuccessful, for, as already related, we had been put on half rations shortly after leaving Macloutsie. Now, however, another misfortune befell us. Salt had run short and our stock of tobacco was finished. These were two serious misfortunes, the first much the worse owing to the fact that our food consisted almost entirely of cattle captured from the enemy. I wish that

I had known then what I learnt later from the South American Indians, namely, that wood ash can be used as an alternative, for shortly after that indispensable article failed us altogether, and our meat, cooked without it, became positively nauseating. As to tobacco, the stock we still had was treasured carefully, the men first chewing their allowance, which was issued in the form of hard cakes stiffened with molasses, then pinning it up in their hats to dry, when they smoked it in their pipes. We knew that the Matabele were themselves smokers, for we had passed many abandoned fields of young tobacco plants, but it was in vain that we searched their huts, for not one blade of the precious leaf could we discover, until one of our men thought he saw signs of the floor having been dug up. Then the secret was out. These huts were semicircular and built of plaited grass, and the floors, which had a pleasing polished appearance, something like marble, were made of red earth mixed with bullock's blood. The inquisitive soldier dug with his bayonet at the spot where he thought the earth had been moved, and was very soon rewarded, for in a hole there lay a goodly stock of tobacco. In each hut we subsequently found it buried in the same manner, and, as they thought, securely concealed from the hated "Molungos," as they called the white man. The tobacco itself was contained in calabashes and mixed half and half with cow-dung, which rather spoilt the flavour, but we were glad enough to get a fill for our pipes and none too particular as to taste and quality.

While at this camp, anxious as always to improve monotonous diet, I collected eggs, for the birds were nesting at the time, and often wandered as far as prudence would allow into the bush in search of them. I used to fill my handkerchief full, and then, returning to camp, mixed the yolks up with flour and, adding a little Eno's Fruit Salt, of which I had a bottle in my wallet, succeeded in producing some very tolerable scones, which were a great improvement on the usual tough "damper."

We broke camp a few mornings later under heavy rain and had a hard, tiring day's march, only outspanning at about four o'clock in the afternoon. Dismounting, I was putting my saddle and harness in the most sheltered spot I could find, when my old friend Sergeant Gibson came up to me in a bullying, hectoring manner and asked my why the hell I had not taken my horses down to water. Not waiting for the answer he flourished his cane and touched me with it, though he did not actually strike me. At this I dropped the harness I had in my hands, and told him to go to hell. I was immediately placed under arrest, and after an uncomfortable night without food was hauled up before Colonel Goold-Adams on the charge of refusing to obey an order.

As I was being conducted before him Andersen slipped a note into my hand which said: "discussed matter between ourselves; old soldiers advise you plead did not hear order given."

I realized that the charge brought against me was a serious one for a soldier on active service, and that I might possibly be shot or condemned to a long term of imprisonment. I knew too that Sergeant Gibson would make as black a case against me as he could, and that I must use the best wits I had to circumvent him. When, therefore, deprived of my spurs, as a cavalryman is when a prisoner, I appeared before the colonel, I determined to follow the advice contained in Andersen's note. Sergeant Gibson spun his tale volubly and circumstantially, so that matters looked decidedly black for me. They looked still worse when Wagstaff, the regimental sergeant-major, backed him up in every detail and added that he himself was a witness to my act of insubordination.

"Why did you not obey the order?" asked the colonel.

"Because I did not hear it," I answered, adding that I had just off-saddled my horses and was busy getting the harness under cover. It was then that Gibson's stupidity saved me. Asked what he had to say, he was foolish enough to reply, "I know that he heard the order, sir, because I touched him with my cane." This did him, for no non-commissioned officer may even touch a soldier, much less strike him. On hearing this answer the colonel at once dismissed the case, and I returned in no small jubilation to resume my spurs and my work. But it was a narrow squeak, and had it not been for Andersen's note and the sergeant's stupidity, who knows how I should have fared.

The following day was an eventful one, and it was obvious to all of us, through precautions taken, that an attack was expected. We left our halting-place at the uncomfortable hour of three in the morning without lighting our fires as usual, our coffee being replaced by a strong tot of "Cape Smoke," which was welcome enough in the chilly damp air. Orders were given for no talking, and as soon as it became light we saw that the regimental doctors were carrying cases of surgical instruments. The pace was increased to a steady trot, and to our disgust we saw the hour of midday pass without any sign of a halt for a meal. Some of us had odds and ends in our pockets, such as a bit of "damper," earth nuts, or Kafir corn, which were devoured eagerly. Others that had it chewed tobacco or smoked their pipes as stoically as possible, but there is nothing the British soldier—he was not called "Tommy" in those days—takes with such bad grace as being deprived of his food. This time there was good reason for both the precautions taken and for our rapid and foodless

march. At about two o'clock in the afternoon we heard rapid firing at the head of the column, and my gun was immediately ordered to the front. After a short, quick gallop we reached the spot where the enemy were, and the gun was unlimbered for action, while Andersen and I were ordered to take our horses to the cover of some trees near by. As I trotted off I passed a man lying on a rock, evidently mortally wounded from a shot through the head. His brains were protruding from the wound, which had shattered his skull, and he was snoring loudly, though insensible. It was Sergeant Gibson, and as I watched him the dreadful snoring ceased and he passed away.

As the rest of the column came up we were ordered to form a square, while the two Maxim guns were posted one at each corner of the laager. We were soon busily engaged on the enemy, who were attacking with great vigour and courage. The long grass seemed full of Matabele warriors, and, having secured my horses, I had nothing to do but gain a point of vantage and watch the fight. I accordingly climbed on to a gun-carriage, and, armed only with my revolver, I was able to get an undisturbed view of the engagement. I soon picked out Selous, who was seated on one of the wagons, firing impassively with a sporting rifle. As I watched him I saw a Matabele, who was partially concealed in the long grass, take careful aim at the hunter with his clumsy muzzle-loader. Firing and seeing the shot tell the Matabele leapt into the air with triumph. But the bullet had only grazed Selous's ribs, inflicting a slight wound which did not prevent the hunter from coolly taking aim and bowling over his antagonist.

Shortly after this incident some of our mounted men made a sortie to attack a group of the enemy who were threatening our position from a hill nearby. Our men charged and were successful in driving them back, but unfortunately our artillery officer chose this very moment to bring his seven-pounder guns into action, and dropped several shells among our own troops. Happily they did but little damage, but it was a foolish blunder.

Meanwhile our Maxims had been firing continuously, but something had gone wrong with No. 2 on the other side of the square; it stuck and had ceased firing. Major Forbes turned to a tall, good-looking officer standing near him and said, "Captain Montmorency, go and put that gun straight." Saluting, the officer proceeded at a very leisurely pace across the square under a somewhat heavy fire from the enemy. Seeing this, Forbes called out, "Captain Montmorency, go down on your hands and knees and crawl," to which the young officer replied, "British officers don't crawl, sir," and continued in the same leisurely



FIGHT AT THE BATTLE OF IMPANDIN (MATABELE WAR)

way, reached the Maxims and carried out his orders, so that in a short time it resumed firing. The battle was soon over now, for the Matabele were no match for disciplined white troops armed with modern weapons, though they put up a very gallant fight, and had shown not a little skill in forcing an engagement on us at a spot where our position was unfavourable. Attacking from the hills above us in their traditional half-moon formation, they had been confident of success, and from prisoners we learnt that the orders were to kill all the old men, but "to lead the young ones in by their pipes." One presumes, therefore, that the fate in store for the majority of us would have been a highly unpleasant one if the battle of Impandin had been decided against us. "Them as die will be the lucky ones," as John Silver said.

As our position was a dangerous one in case of another attack, we moved on that evening while it was still light and occupied a high position. I laid down in my blankets and thought over the events of the day. I remembered what the old soldier had told me when we left Macloutsie, that on active service the only rest was when one was fighting. He was right, for the 21st of September, 1890, on which day the battle of Impandin was fought, was the first occasion in the campaign when I had been free to think and do as I liked for a period of some hours. With that thought I turned over in my blankets and was soon fast asleep.

The following day dawned fine, and there was a pleasant air of laziness about the camp, and after our successful engagement of the day before neither officers nor "non-coms" were disposed to worry us with fatigues or parades. Shortly after breakfast Andersen and I were ordered to saddle our horses and ride back to the scene of the battle and make an estimate of the number of the Matabele killed. It was an interesting job which would give us some pleasant hours of independence, and we both felt happy as we jogged along, smoking our pipes in the warm sunshine. On approaching the battle-field we reigned in our horses, as natives in considerable numbers were visible in the low-lying plain beneath us. On catching sight of us, however, they quickly ran off, and we then saw that they were only Mashonas searching for what they might find. We then descended to where our laager had been and started counting the dead, of whom we found some one hundred and twenty.

At dinner-time my servant Charlie failed to put in an appearance, and I was worried, for I feared that he had either run away, as many other native servants did after the battle, or that he had strayed and been captured by the Matabele, in which case his fate would have been unenviable. My anxiety increased during the afternoon, when there was still no sign of

him, but in the evening, as I was sitting over a very small fire—we were not allowed to make a big blaze for fear of attracting the enemy—he appeared with a smile of satisfaction on his face, carrying his assagai and knobkerrie. I did not pay much attention to the truant until the meal was over and the men had lit their pipes, when I asked him where he had been. I then elicited the following. After my departure he had gone into the woods to look for berries, and had then come across a wounded Matabele warrior lying on the ground. Seating himself on an adjacent log of wood close to the wounded man, Charlie had set himself to enjoy the spectacle of his agony, dealing the dying man every now and then a knock with his knobkerrie. Like a cat with a mouse, he sat thus throughout the day, tapping and striking the prostrate man until death relieved him. Charlie had no notion that he had done wrong, and could not understand the reason of the sound beating I gave him before turning into bed. He thought, no doubt, that the Molungos, or white men, were wholly incomprehensible beings, and that it was useless to attempt to understand them.

We broke camp the following morning, and outspanned at midday in the open country, when, to my disgust, I was told that my Maxim gun and about a hundred men were to remain at this spot, while the main column continued its march towards Bulawayo. The dismay of my companions and myself may well be imagined, for we thought that we should miss all the adventure and fighting which would fall to the others. But there was nothing for it but to obey orders and put a cheerful face on things. We had, however, another unpleasant surprise when we were told that we were to build a fort, for this we knew meant hard and monotonous labour with spades and entrenching tools. The officer left in command of us was not endowed by nature with much intelligence, but we had yet to learn the full extent of his stupidity, when our work began and we found that he had marked out the site of the fort at the base of a bare kopje, or hill, from which the enemy, had he so willed, could have dropped stones on the garrison below and destroyed every man of us. That the Matabele did not make short work of our party was probably due to the fact that he was engaged in watching the column going northwards, or he may have thought that our childish fort was a piece of white man's magic which he would do better not to interfere with. So we slaved at our foolish construction under rain and sunshine until the edifice was completed, after which, but for the frequency of sentry-go, we had a fairly easy time.

One morning Andersen and I were given orders which promised

us a pleasant outing, but which had, however, a curious sequel. We were told to ride to a certain spot about thirty miles distant, where we would meet a mounted infantry detachment of the Black Watch which was coming up to reinforce us, and to deliver to their commanding officer a letter. We were told to take two grey horses which neither of us had ridden before. They were in good condition after their rest, and my mount started by bucking me off when I touched him with my spur. It was a clean throw, and as I fell my head struck a Mashona hut with no little force. However, I was soon up again, and as the horses seemed so full of life we didn't hesitate to take them along at a good smart canter, until, following our directions carefully, we met the detachment and delivered our letter to the officer in command. This done, we cantered back as fast as we had come. On arrival we reported ourselves, and then retired, thinking we had done our job in a smart, soldier-like manner. Our surprise was great, therefore, when on the following morning we were told to appear before the C.O. on a charge of assaulting two Mashona girls who had come into camp on the previous evening and deposed that two Molungos on grey horses had visited their huts and made an attempt on their chastity! Here was female duplicity with a vengeance, for who could have thought that such a plot could have been conceived by untutored savages. But this was the case, and the two maidens, with whom we were confronted, no doubt thought that their denunciation of us would be rewarded by a handsome present of flour, beef, and what not. They looked very demure in their nudity, and gesticulated violently when we were marched up before the commanding officer, the intelligent architect of the fort. But innocence and righteous indignation were reflected in our features, and, in addition, the quick time in which we had done our journey to and fro clearly admitted of no amorous dalliance on the way. The case was therefore dismissed, fortunately for us, for rape carried with it a penalty varying from death to several years imprisonment with hard labour, as the native Mashonas knew perfectly well. Needless to say, our comrades subjected us to endless chaff and inquiries as to "the pore gurls 'oo's trustin' souls we 'ad deceived."

My servant Charlie had by now quite recovered his spirits after the beating I had given him, and since the affair with the wounded Matabele had assumed a conquering and warlike attitude. At night he would chatter to himself and imitate the firing of his beloved Maxim gun.

One day, after a heavy rain, when searching for possible variations from our monotonous diet, I found some mushrooms

which appeared to me to be of the edible kind, and were indeed apparently similar to those eaten in England. On inquiry, Charlie, however, assured me they were poisonous, and to emphasize the fact he went through all the contortions of a man dying, clenching his fists and simulating the greatest suffering. But, in spite of this, I believed the mushrooms were all right, and, having tried them myself without ill effects, I made a stew of them on the following day for the mess, who duly appreciated the delicacy. My servant, however, watched us narrowly and refused himself to touch the remains of the pot. Primitive people generally have a good knowledge of edible plants, but they are not always infallible. Once a Spanish peasant, seeing me eagerly devour some wild black currants in his country, assured me, with many an oath and asseveration, that they were poisonous.

CHAPTER XI

LOBENGULA'S LAST STAND

ONE fine day we received the welcome news that the period of our inaction was at an end, and that we were marching to join the main column, which was halted at some distance from Bulawayo.

The call to "boot and saddle" was obeyed with alacrity, and such of our horses as had escaped the mortal veld sickness stepped out bravely after their long rest and good feeding. In three days we had rejoined the rest of the expedition, and learnt, not a little to our satisfaction, that they had spent their time as monotonously as we had and had seen no fighting. It was expected, however, that we should meet with a stout resistance at Bulawayo, the capital and head-quarters of Lobengula, and every preparation was made to meet it. We were now joined by a considerable body of British South African Police, who had come from Victoria, and together we marched into the Matabele capital, contrary to our expectations encountering no resistance. Lobengula had fled north with a bodyguard of his warriors, and had carried with him his treasure, consisting of a large sum of money in bullion. Our forces, now several thousands strong, encamped a few hundred yards north of the town, and the work of the expedition was seemingly at an end. After a few days, however, it was decided to send a small force in pursuit of the fugitive king, and about three hundred men with a Maxim and a seven-pounder gun were detailed for the work, under the command of Major Forbes. I was among those selected, and was told in the early morning to hold myself and horse in readiness to start, but at midday the order was reversed, to my great regret. I watched the patrol march away on what we knew would be an exciting quest. Accompanied by two skilful American scouts, accustomed to all the wiles and ruses of Indian warfare in their own land, they travelled as fast as the condition of their weary horses would allow. On the morning of the second day the tracks were picked up. Lobengula was suffering from a violent attack of gout and was being wheeled in a bath-chair, which the fugitive monarch had brought out from England some time previously, and the marks of the wheels in the sand made a trail which was easy to follow. Hopes ran high, and it was expected that his capture and that of his treasure would be an easy matter; but at midday, when the patrol halted in an arid

country, it was seen that the bush and surrounding rocks concealed countless numbers of the enemy, who had selected this spot by the Shangani River to make their last stand in defence of their king. While the enemy opened a desultory fire on our troops, a Matabele chief stood up on a great rock which jutted out over the gorge, and delivered what must have been the final oration of his nation. He was a magnificent specimen of his race, armed with shield and assagai and clad in a leopard skin, and his tall, commanding figure faced the British defiantly, while his voice with fierce denunciation rang loud and clear over the gorge. He seemed to bear a charmed life, for though a volley of bullets was directed on him by our men none touched him. At length, having finished his discourse, the chief stepped down from the rock, and the enemy then opened a heavy fire on our men.

Meanwhile our officers were engaged in serious deliberation, and it was decided to send Major Wilson with twenty men to the banks of the Shangani River for the purpose of drawing the enemy from their present strong position, and for ascertaining their strength. Both parties were at once heavily engaged by the enemy, who now almost encircled our forces.

After an hour's fighting, Major Wilson realized that his position was desperate, and instructed Burnham, the American scout, to return to the main body for reinforcements. Burnham asked that another scout, also an American, should accompany him, so that in case of one of them falling the other should deliver the message. To this Wilson agreed. These two men were the sole survivors of the subsequent massacre. Their comrades, after a desperate fight against overwhelming odds, died gallantly, and fighting to the last.

It was only an episode of one of our minor wars, but their brave stand lives in history.

Meanwhile the survivors of the patrol had been hotly pressed by the enemy, and when Burnham and his companion arrived there was no possibility of sending relief to Major Wilson and his men, for the main body was surrounded by the enemy, and it was all they could do to hold their own against superior odds. At any moment their laager might be rushed, and this would have meant a general massacre. The heavy and continuous firing of Major Wilson's party was clearly heard, and told of their serious defence. Presently the firing slackened and revolver shots were heard. Then there was silence on the Shangani River.

As night came on the attacks of the Matabele against our main body slackened and finally ceased, and the officer in charge, on the advice of the American scouts, decided to break camp and

to return to Inyati, leaving his guns behind him. The decision was a dangerous one, but it offered the only chance of safety. As soon, therefore, as darkness set in the retreat commenced, and the reluctance of the Matabele to attack at night proved our salvation, so that by dawn the patrol had sufficiently passed the enemy lines and were in safety.

From Inyati the force proceeded back to Bulawayo, where they arrived in a very different condition to the dashing troops which had left only a few days before. Their horses were nearly all dead, and the few still alive were used to accommodate the wounded, who, without medical assistance of any kind, had undergone great sufferings. One, a trooper named Lafleur, had been severely wounded and on arrival at Bulawayo it was found necessary to amputate his leg at the hip. The operation was performed by Dr. Jameson, who had just arrived at Bulawayo with Cecil Rhodes, but no anæsthetic was available, and the unhappy man was subjected to a fearful ordeal. He asked for a cigar, which was somehow found for him by one of the officers, and smoked steadily till the operation was almost over, when he fainted. Lafleur was a man of splendid physique, but the shock was too much for him, and he died on the following morning.

The remainder of the wounded, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the lack of doctors and drugs, all made good recoveries.

Authentic information now reached us at Bulawayo of the death of Lobengula, which occurred shortly after the fighting on the Shangani, and its accuracy was proved by the fact that the Matabele were surrendering in large numbers. His treasure, amounting to twelve thousand pounds, was also recovered, after a daring but unsuccessful attempt on the part of a trooper to make away with it. For this he was sentenced to imprisonment for a number of years.

The resistance of the enemy being clearly broken, a patrol was dispatched to the Shangani River to bury the bodies of Major Wilson and his men. When the party arrived at the spot they found that the bodies had been picked clean by vultures, but each man lay where he had fallen, behind his horse, which had served for cover against the enemy. At their sides lay rifle and revolver and a great number of spent cartridges. Close by were the enemy's dead, their numbers attesting to the severity of the struggle and to the fact that, in spite of their overwhelming superiority in numbers, they had never succeeded in breaking into the white man's laager. One body was noticeable owing to the amount of spent ammunition at his side and the number of Lobengula's warriors who lay dead before him. It was said by our prisoners that he was the last to survive, and that the

Matabele, impressed by his splendid courage and fighting power, had offered him his life. I do not know whether the name of this hero has ever been ascertained, but it was then believed to be that of a trooper, whom I had known slightly, in the British South African Police. He and his comrades were buried where they lay on the field of honour.

But these were events at which I was not present, and I must now return to my story.

After the occupation of Bulawayo we had some hours of very hard work in pitching our camp, picketing horses, and putting things generally shipshape. I was glad, therefore, to roll up in my blankets and court a well-earned rest. I must have slept for a couple of hours or more, when I awoke with a feeling of uneasiness which I could not account for. It was a bright, starry night and the full moon flooded the camp with its silvery rays. Beyond the forms of the sleeping men I descried a number of shadowy shapes which I could not at first account for. Looking closely I saw a large pack of wild dogs, seated on their haunches in rows three deep, their tongues hanging out, while from time to time their eyes scintillated in the moonlight with a greenish-red lustre which made an uncanny effect.

Our duties at Bulawayo, now that marching and fighting were over, became very monotonous, consisting as they did of parades, guards, and fatigues, and it was a relief when, after three or four days, I was selected to carry dispatches to Fig Tree Camp, a spot about forty miles south on the road we had come by. It was a journey not without danger, as the country was still in an unsettled state, and a man alone was as likely as not to be attacked by the numerous Matabele bands who were still at large. I was given a good horse and told to ride to Usher's Farm near Bulawayo, the property of a trader of that name, where I would find the tracks of a wagon about two months old which would lead me by a short-cut into the main road, and so on to my destination. I found the tracks of the wagon easily enough, but after travelling for some distance they became very faint and by no means easy to follow, and I wished that I had taken the longer but surer route. Just before striking the main road, on coming round a clump of bushes, I rode straight into some half-score of natives. Fortunately, however, they proved to be Mashonas and made no attempt to molest me. Once on the main road I put my horse along at his best pace, and reached Fig Tree Camp at about 4.30 p.m. Having handed over my dispatches to the officer commanding, I was told by a "non-com" to fall in for stables, which, considering I had not had a morsel of food since my early breakfast at 7 a.m., seemed rather

inconsiderate on his part. Stables over, however, I enjoyed a tot of "Cape Smoke" and some supper, after which I was free to turn in. On the following morning I left again with dispatches, and arrived safely at Bulawayo without meeting with any adventure on the way. This proved to be my last mounted job while on this expedition, for sickness had taken a heavy toll of our horses, and those that survived were, with few exceptions, only skin and bone, and unfit for any work. The B.B.P. was in fact, dismounted, and no one amongst us felt this fact more than I did.

The health of the troops had also suffered owing to our diet, which consisted only of beef and flour. Salt was scarce and no vegetables procurable. As a result of this dysentery and fever had become prevalent, causing not a few deaths. Our officers fared but little better than we did, and the only man in Bulawayo who had the best of everything was Cecil Rhodes, who had brought with him a large supply of stores, which included every luxury, such as champagne, tinned foods, and *pâté de foie gras*. When our half-starved men saw the remnants of the feasts, empty bottles, and tins outside the tent of the great African statesman they were apt to use very plain and decidedly strong language.

Cecil Rhodes's unpopularity with our men was not, however, only due to this, but dated back to the day of his arrival in Bulawayo, when troops were paraded and an address delivered by that statesman. In this address, while belauding the conduct of the British South African colonial forces, he totally ignored the presence and work of the Bechuanaland Police, who were British Government troops, and had done their work certainly no less well than the former.

For some time a rumour, originating no one knew how, had caused the wildest excitement in camp. It was said that an enterprising Jew, named Weil, was sending up a number of wagons laden with foodstuffs, wines, spirits, cigarettes, and tobacco. Considering that we had been without proper, or even sufficient, food for over six months, that our drink had been limited to one small tot of vile "Cape Smoke" a day, and that we had been smoking a mixture of native tobacco and cow-dung, our excitement may easily be imagined. But the wildest stories are current in a soldiers' camp, and we had been disappointed on so many occasions that most of us, though we discussed the rumour, disbelieved it in our hearts. When, however, we heard that the wagons had actually passed Fig Tree Camp hopes ran high, though the gloomy ones were sure that the troops at that spot had cleared out everything that was worth having. Some

days later, however, the wagons came creaking slowly into Bulawayo and out-spanned within a few yards of the camp.

Since leaving Macloutsie none of us had drawn any pay, and as every trooper received a minimum of seven-and-six a day there was quite a lot of money owing to us. We were now informed that vouchers up to the amount to which we were entitled would be given us, and that these would be accepted at Messrs. Weil's wagon stores. That evening there was a rush to them, and we presently sat down to a supper composed of such luxuries as sardines, jam, Cape wines, brandy, and Wills's cigarettes. Even now the memory of it is unforgettable, and especially the first whiff of that cigarette after the first substantial meal we had had for months. The Jews did not, of course, forget to charge for their goods. A small pot of jam was four shillings and sixpence, a packet of cigarettes five shillings, and so on, and in a very short time the whole arrears of our pay were in their hands, and we were once again reduced to the unpalatable Government rations.

By an arrangement made at the outset of the expedition every man taking part in it was entitled to peg out a small farm and a gold claim in the now conquered Matabeleland, and the owners of the food wagons were not slow to turn their attention to this opportunity of doing business, and offered to take these properties off our hands at a valuation of a few shillings. Many of our men were foolish enough to sell on these terms, and the purchasers made a double gain, for most of the money was spent at the stores on foodstuffs, drink, and tobacco. I myself was one of the foolish ones, and I invested the proceeds of my farm and gold claim in a rattling good supper for a party of my friends. That it was an expensive meal may be gathered from the fact that many years after I saw in the papers that one of these farms sold for five thousand pounds!

As the country was now comparatively quiet it was decided that a number of men were to return to Macloutsie, and Andersen's and my name were among them. A battalion of the Black Watch had, as I have already related, marched into Matabeleland and eventually reached Bulawayo, and was now under orders to return to Cape Town. My companions and I were therefore attached to this famous regiment for the journey to Macloutsie.

On the day following my supper-party we marched out of Bulawayo at daybreak, and although I have never been very fond of walking I was interested and not a little proud to be associated with such a famous regiment as the gallant 42nd. Most of the soldiers were young boys from the manufacturing towns of the north, and, though smart enough, they were, like

most town-bred people, not easily able to adapt themselves to circumstances. We of the B.B.P. were now fairly experienced veldmen and knew all about lighting fires, cooking our food, and making ourselves comfortable. The "Jocks," however, did not seem to have profited by their experience in the same way; but perhaps this was because they were so extremely well looked after by their officers. I shall never forget my surprise on the first evening after our march when a young lieutenant came up and asked me if I had had my tea and was feeling comfortable, for we were not used to these attentions. The "non-coms" were, however, by no means as polite as the officers, and from the start we were handicapped through being accustomed to cavalry drill, which is in many respects different to that of the infantry. This was the cause of a good deal of swearing and cursing on the part of the sergeants and corporals, and it never seemed to strike them that we were in no way to blame for our ignorance. But there are plenty of these little inconsistencies in life in the ranks. In other respects our life was not unpleasant, the distances covered were not excessive, and the food was good. We were all in high spirits too at the prospect of a return to the comforts of civilization.

We were about twenty men of the B.B.P., and, of course, we kept together, and, except when on the march, had little to do with our Highland comrades. Our journey was undistinguished by any incident or adventure until we reached the Limpopo River. There was a small shanty on the opposite side, which was Transvaal territory, and a man named White told us that drinks and eatables were sold there, and proposed to Andersen and myself to swim over and give ourselves the luxury of a glass of something strong. The river, as I have already stated in these pages, was full of crocodiles, but it was in strong flood, and therefore the danger from these animals was lessened, for they prefer the quiet pools and eddies, where they lie in wait for their prey. But we were all three of us keen on anything that smacked of adventure, and stripping naked we walked up stream for a bit and then plunged in. After a pretty tough struggle, for the current was strong, we succeeded in landing just below the grog shanty, which we found to be in charge of a stout young Boer woman, who seemed scarcely at all surprised at the sight of three naked "roineks." We showed her our money, which Andersen carried in a belt round his waist, and she then served us with three small glasses of a very fiery gin, known locally as "Square Face." After drinking it, we bade her good-bye and plunged again into the river. The current now seemed stronger than ever, and somehow my comrades out-

distanced me. Suddenly, to my horror, I saw what I took to be a crocodile coming for me at great speed. It seemed an eternity, but was really only a few seconds, before I saw that the horrid thing bearing down on me with the current was only an ugly black submerged log, the shape of which bore an uncanny likeness to a crocodile's head.

I had hitherto kept my health during the campaign, but shortly after this I was unfortunate enough to be attacked by dysentery, which pulled me down to a considerable extent. Those who have had this unpleasant and painful disease will know how difficult it is to march and live on rough food when one is suffering from it.

Shortly after leaving our camp on the Limpopo River there was trouble with our bullock drivers, who became insubordinate, and two of them were sentenced to receive twenty-five strokes with the *sjambok*, or rhinoceros hide whip. I was lying under a thorn bush at the time, feeling very seedy, and the sentence was carried out nearby. The first to undergo the punishment was a burly Zulu, who walked up to the wagon wheel with the proud bearing of his race. Stripped to his waist, he was tied to the cart wheel and his punishment began. The first three strokes made great black streaks on his powerful back, but after that the blood began to flow, and it was evident that the punishment was a very severe one, for from his shoulders to his waist he became a mass of raw, quivering flesh. He bore it, however, without a murmur, and when he was cast loose he flung his coat over his shoulders and, giving a look of concentrated rage at the man who had flogged him, walked off with the same proud demeanour. The second delinquent, a Bechuana, then took his place at the cart wheel; but as soon as the first stroke fell, he filled the air with his shrieks and prayers for mercy. I think he only had six or seven strokes when, by order of the doctor who was present, he was cast loose.

On reaching Macloutsie I was so weak from the effects of dysentery that I asked for my discharge, which, after medical examination, was granted, and I was allowed to continue my journey south with the 42nd. My servant Charlie having many of his old friends in the camp wished to remain here, so I paid him off and gave him an extra present, which included as many threepenny bits as I could lay hold of. I went to look for him in the evening in the native camp to say good-bye, and found him sitting over the fire, giving a voluble demonstration to his friends of the campaign he had just been through, imitating with great effect the rattle of the Maxims and the roar of the field guns. His audience seemed much impressed, and evidently looked upon Charlie as a great warrior. After dividing the contents of my

tobacco pouch among them I said good-bye to Charlie with no little regret.

We marched the following morning, and as I was feeling far from well I was very glad to find that my friend Andersen had also decided to take his discharge and was accompanying us.

Throughout all the hardships we had undergone my health had been excellent, but now my luck seemed out, for on the next morning I met with an accident which laid me on my back for a considerable time. It occurred in the following manner. We camped at midday near a muddy-looking pond, and, foolishly, I decided to have a bath to see if it would freshen me up. In doing so I ran a big thorn deep into the sole of my foot, and in pulling it out the thorn broke, part remaining imbedded in the muscles of the foot. I tried in vain to get the piece out, but it was deep in ; so I finally persuaded myself that there was nothing there, and that the soreness was merely caused by digging at the hole in my flesh with a knife. I marched that afternoon, but as on the following day my foot had become painful and inflamed I reported sick to the "Jock" sergeant, and asked to be allowed to ride on the wagon. He, however, sniffed at me, and said I was only malingering, and told me to fall in as usual. That evening my foot was greatly swollen, and even the sergeant agreed that I couldn't walk, and allowed me to get into the wagon, which was to prove my home for many trying weeks. The wagon was laden with Martini-Henry rifles, which made any position, whether lying or sitting, extremely uncomfortable, and its only occupant besides myself and the driver, was a black man who had been severely wounded in the stomach, and whose wound, being gangrenous, emitted a dreadful odour. The poor fellow died a few days later, and his death must have been a relief to him after so much suffering, as indeed it was to me.

Meanwhile my foot became steadily worse and not a little painful. Matter had formed, and the only relief I could get was by lancing it once or twice a day. My friend Andersen brought me food and helped me in many ways as far as he was able. I lay there for six weeks, alternately under rain and sun, till finally we reached Fort Gaberones, where I had stopped on my march up to Macloutsie. My cousin, Major Audley Gosling, was still in command here, and with some other officers came out to meet the detachment. Seeing him I waved my hand, but was disconcerted to receive no response or sign of recognition. Later, however, he told me that he wondered who the "dirty-looking scoundrel with the red beard was." The wagons outspanned a few hundred yards outside the fort, and the men all rushed to canteen, which had just sounded. Even Andersen forgot me for this once,

and I was left alone, unable to move, until late in the afternoon. I was sleeping when I was wakened by Andersen's return at about four o'clock in the afternoon accompanied by a stout soldier, who volunteered to carry me up to camp and into hospital on his back. It was not an altogether pleasant journey, and I must have fainted. When I came to I found myself in a comfortable bed with sheets and my jovial-faced cousin standing over me with a glass and a small bottle of champagne in his hands. What an exquisite drink it was, giving me new life and soothing my jangled nerves. Presently I had a little dinner, and then fell asleep and slept the clock round.

Next morning the doctor visited me, looked grave, probed the wound, but said there was no thorn in it. He was a young man and did not inspire me with any sort of confidence in his knowledge or skill; indeed, his handling of the probe was not a little painful, and I grew to dread his visits. The hospital orderly too was very rough and inexperienced, and altogether, though my health improved under the influence of good food and rest, my wound got no better.

One day the doctor told me there was danger of blood-poisoning setting in, and that he feared I should have to submit to amputation of my foot. However, I firmly resisted this suggestion, as I had no intention of affording practice to this sawbones, and I told him that I preferred to keep my foot on even if it was going to cost me my life. Seeing that I was determined he gave in, and consented to do what I had often suggested to him, namely, to poultice the wound. This treatment was continued for three days, and on the morning of the third day, when the poultice was taken off, the stump of the thorn came out. After this the wound healed rapidly, and I was soon up and about, though I remained slightly lame for a year or more after. As soon as I was well my cousin sent me down with a man and a couple of horses to Vryburg, where I had determined to stay for a bit and look round me. I put up at the shanty which served as hotel in those days, and found the return to such relative luxury very pleasant.

Vryburg was the head-quarters of the Commissioner of Bechuanaland, a post which was at that time held by the late Sir Sidney Shippard, K.C.M.G., who was not only an able administrator but a man with a wide knowledge of men and matters. In appearance he was very small and tubby, with a bald head and flowing Dundreary whiskers. Nevertheless, there was the heart of a hero hidden beneath this unromantic exterior. Some years previous to the campaign in which I had just served, a mission had been sent up to Bulawayo to present the photograph

of Queen Victoria to Lobengula. Sir Sidney, then Mr. Shippard, was entrusted with this mission, and his escort, if my memory serves me, consisted of an officer of the Blues with half a dozen Lifeguardsmen, and one or two other officers stationed in Africa. As soon as they crossed the border they were met by a body of Matabele warriors, who were to serve ostensibly as an escort, but whose behaviour before long became so threatening that, at a given moment, the officer in charge ordered his men to fire. Shippard, however, with great coolness countermanded the order, though it was given under circumstances of the greatest provocation. In doing this he undoubtedly saved the lives of the whole party, for the first shot fired would certainly have been the signal for their immediate massacre. The mission continued their journey under circumstances of great difficulty and finally reached Bulawayo. Here there was a delay of some days while the question was debated by the king's advisers in what form the presentation should take place. They finally decided and intimated to Shippard and his party that it was necessary for them to enter the Royal presence crawling on their hands and knees. Representations proved unavailing, and again matters assumed an ugly aspect. Shippard, however, decided to allow no more discussion and, choosing a time when he knew the king was visible, he and his party marched up to the royal hut, entered, and, after delivering an address, presented the Queen's photograph. This bold action apparently pleased Lobengula, and the mission was unmolested and returned in safety. Its gallant leader was rewarded with the K.C.M.G., and I question whether any civilian, even in those days when honours were not scattered broadcast, ever deserved the distinction better.

One of my first acts was to call and pay my respects at Government House, and as my cousin, Major Gosling, was then engaged to be married to Sir Sidney's charming and clever daughter, I was at once treated as one of the family, and shortly after invited to stay with them.

CHAPTER XII

VRYBURG AND KIMBERLEY

THE Queen's Birthday of May 24, 1894, was then approaching, and preparations were made to celebrate it in a becoming manner. It was customary on this occasion to hold an up-country race at Vryburg, and one day a man came up and asked if I would ride a horse for him in one of the events. I told him I had had no experience of race-riding, but he said, "If you are a cousin of old Goosey, you're all right." This optimistic deduction was based on the fact that my cousin, Major Gosling, was well known as a good amateur jockey, and as the owner of the mount was satisfied, I accepted his offer and arranged to ride the horse in his gallop on the following day. Rocket, as the animal was named, was a big, raw-boned bay gelding with apparently a trace of blood and a good deal of the cart-horse. He was one of those breeding mistakes which one often finds on the other side of the Atlantic, but, like not a few of them, he could gallop. A small pig eye, showing a good bit of white, indicated that his temper was none of the best, and I now learnt that the cause of my being offered the mount was that he had, a day or two before, thrown and injured the man who was to have ridden him, and that nobody else coveted that doubtful honour and pleasure. When I mounted him I found that he had a shocking mouth, and that his gallop, unless fully extended, was so disunited that he almost shot one out of the saddle. However, this didn't lessen my enthusiasm for my first mount in a race, and Rocket took to me kindly, as horses sometimes do when they get a change of riders. He went well in his gallops, and crept up in the betting until he became third favourite, and I actually began to dream of winning with him. But on the day of the race his temper was obviously none of the best, and his little pig eyes showed more white than ever when I was thrown into the saddle. He first jibbed at the crowd, and refused to pass the grand stand; then, after exhausting my patience, he started plunging and pig-jumping when I punished him with whip and spurs. He then took a great dislike to the starter and his flag, made several false starts and finally was left at the post. I got him off, however, and as, like Mr. Sponge's Multum in Parvo, he had a good turn at speed when he wanted to go, very soon he drew up with the ruck. The race was a mile over the flat, and there was no time to lose, so with all

possible tact, and without using spur or whip, I coaxed him up just behind the leading three. Finding that he responded all right, as we got into the straight I sent him along and up to the leader whose rider challenged me. Taking Rocket by the head, I sat down and put the spurs to him. But, alas! with the first taste of punishment the cart-horse showed, and my mount shut up like a knife and finished fourth. In spite of his disappointment, the owner was very good-natured about his losses, and I felt that, for my first race, I had not done badly considering the cross-grained animal I was on.

When the day's racing was over I went down to the club for a drink, and just as I entered the smoking-room I heard a man say in a loud voice, "Of course, Gosling pulled his horse." The speaker was a Scotch farmer named Quinn, a big, burly man of about thirty-five to forty. Quinn was a morose, disagreeable fellow whom nobody liked, and was fond of bullying any young man whom he considered less powerful than himself. I was so incensed, however, at his remark that I walked up to him and told him in plain language—soldiering had taught me not to mince my words—that he was a liar. He at once challenged me to a fight, which I accepted; and as it was already turning dark, we agreed that it should take place on the following morning in the courtyard of the Vryburg Hotel. These were rough days in South Africa and fights not uncommon occurrences, but I felt very annoyed at having one forced on me, more especially as my opponent was twice my weight, while I was out of condition after my long spell of sickness and still slightly lame on my foot. There was, however, apparently no way out of it, and on the following day, while on my way to the Vryburg Hotel, I met the local butcher, a man named Rich, and asked him to act as my second. He cheerfully agreed, and shortly after my opponent appeared on the scene with his second, who made an attempt to patch up the quarrel. Speaking for me, Rich said that I would be glad to make it up if Quinn would apologize for having stated that I pulled Rocket in the race; but this he refused to do. A ring was then made and the fight began. In the first round I was badly punished, for I was very nervous and, moreover, quite unable to reach Quinn's face on account of his advantage in height. In the second round, however, I took matters more calmly and succeeded in giving my opponent several good body punches which were not without effect. The end came quite suddenly, for after getting him a blow at close quarters Quinn fell and then sang out that his leg had gone. I retired to my corner while he was counted out, and then went up, shook him by the hand, and said we could

finish it another day if he wished. But, poor fellow, he was to fight no more, for after being removed to hospital the local saw-bones declared that an immediate operation on the knee was necessary. The operation was performed, blood-poisoning set in, and in two days Quinn was dead. After attending his funeral a summons for manslaughter was served on me, and in three weeks I appeared on trial, when, needless to say, the judge found that I could not be responsible for the man's death, but that I was guilty of common assault, and he sentenced me to pay a fine of ten pounds. I was about to pay the money into court when I found that this had already been done, but by whom I do not to this day know. But I had my sympathisers, for Quinn was known as a bully, and it was clear to every one that I had not sought the quarrel.

It had been rather a trying business, however, and as my health was not yet completely restored, my cousin, who was the kindest of men, invited me to come down to Kimberley for ten days, together with a gay young Irishman named George Condon.

Kimberley in the 'nineties was a cheerful and pretty wild sort of place, and it is well described in an amusing, but now forgotten, novel called "Mixed Humanity," which was written by a gentleman prize-fighter whose name I cannot remember, but who was well known at that time. Such men as Barney Barnato, Beit, and others, still alive, were just beginning to make their fortunes in the diamond business, and money was being spent like water. Another interesting character was a man named Scotty Smith—if, indeed, that was his name—who was the only real highway robber which South Africa ever boasted of. He was said to have been at Eton, and his looks and manners certainly gave the impression that he came of gentle stock. In appearance he was rather the Mark Twain type of desperado—tall and handsome with a long, fair moustache. He looked, as a matter of fact, quite respectable. I met Scotty Smith for the first time at Government House in Vryburg, where he had called to give Sir Sidney Shippard some information, and I saw him again in the hotels and bars about Kimberley. When not actively engaged in his profession the British authorities suffered him to come and go unmolested, owing to the fact that he confined his attentions almost entirely to the Boers and never by any chance robbed an Englishman. Besides, he was stated to have shown great gallantry as well as skill in the war of 1881 as a sharpshooter, which further explained his immunity. To the Boers, however, he was a holy terror, and if they heard that he was anywhere in the neighbourhood they brought their horses and cattle close up to their houses and themselves remained indoors, rifle to hand.

Scotty's main line of business was horse stealing, and being a skilful and daring rider he made large hauls, which he successfully disposed of in various parts of the country. Though he was caught and locked up many times, no jail could hold him, and like his prototype, Dick Turpin, he always made good his escape. Many amusing stories were told of his coolness and dexterity, and the following is an example : Riding out of Kimberley one morning he was stopped by a Boer who said, " That's my horse you're riding. Where did you get him from ? " Scotty on this occasion was taken at a disadvantage, for he was only going a short distance and was unarmed, while the Boer carried his long-barrelled rifle, as was, in those days, the invariable custom. Scotty, seeing that the other had not recognized him, attempted to gain time, and assuming a very innocent air said that he had bought the animal that he bestrode from a friend in Kimberley, adding that he had only recently arrived from England. The Boer, however, was obdurate, and insisted that he should dismount, as he intended to take the horse with him. Scotty, apparently in despair, then appealed to his sporting instincts, and suggested that they should put up a mark and shoot at it, the winner keeping the horse. This offer aroused all the contempt of the Boer, for in those days his was a race of wonderful marksmen, and they ridiculed the pretensions of any Englishman being able to compete with them. He therefore agreed, and Scotty's hat was placed on a bush a couple of hundred yards or so away, and the Englishman courteously allowed his opponent the first shot. The Boer fired and hit the hat plum in the centre, after which he handed his rifle to the outlaw, who promptly pointed it at his head, saying, " I am Scotty Smith, hand over your money ! " On receiving this, still covering his man, he mounted and galloped off with the two horses as well as the rifle, leaving the Boer dismounted and weaponless in the veld, a sadder and a wiser man.

I do not know what became of Scotty or if he reformed in later life, but he was a merry rascal, and most Englishmen of those days in South Africa had a weak spot in their hearts for him.

A much more common form of crime was I.D.B., or illicit diamond buying, a trade at which, if reports were true, a good many people had made fortunes. It was, of course, wholly illegal and punished by a long term of imprisonment with hard labour ; but, nevertheless, it was difficult to go into a bar or take a walk without somebody, generally a negro, whispering an offer of some stone in your ear. The thief, of course, sold his diamond at greatly below its real value, and the profits of I.D.B. were consequently very great. All sorts of tricks were

resorted to so as to conceal the stones and get them over the Portuguese frontier: packing them in gun barrels, sticking them in the cushions of a carriage or sewing them in the skin of a riding horse, down to swallowing them, were some of the many devices which were successfully carried out to escape the vigilance of the army of detectives employed by the De Beers Company, who had the sole right of trafficking in these precious stones.

My cousin, George Condon, and myself put up at an hotel kept by a sister of Barney Barnato, a tall handsome Jewess with a considerable capacity for keeping her guests, who were often rowdy and drunken, in order. Fights were everyday occurrences in most of the bars and in the streets, and there were very few police to interfere.

One of the objects of my journey was to buy some ponies, for which there was a considerable demand in Vryburg, and one morning, when my two other friends were sleeping off the results of the potations of the previous evening, I visited the horse market betimes and bought four ponies—two bays and two greys, unbroken and almost unhandled—at a cost of about four pounds a head. We returned to Vryburg on the following day, after succeeding with no small difficulty in loading these animals into a horse-box on the train, as they had never seen a horse-truck before, and it needed a lot of skill and persuasion to half coax, half bully them into it.

I was fully occupied for the next month in handling and breaking these animals, which turned out quite well. The two bays I sold for polo ponies to a member of the club that had just been started, and the two greys, which were sturdy, promising youngsters, were bought by a traveller and hunter called Grey, who, if I am not mistaken, was a brother of the present Lord Grey of Fallodon. Grey died some years later from wounds inflicted by a lion.

Although I had now been in Africa for nearly two years, and had seen a good deal of the country comprised between Cape Colony and the Zambesi River, there was one experience which I had not had: I had never been lost in the veld. This, however, was to come. At certain periods of the year it is the custom of the natives to set fire to the tall grass that is of no use to the cattle, and after this the young under-shoots spring up over the ashes, which act as a fertilizer. Up north, in the game country, such fires, though often dangerous, are interesting to watch, for you may see every kind of wild animal—the beast of prey and those preyed on—united for once by fear, and fleeing before the flames. In the neighbourhood of Vryburg, however, there was not much game, only a few partridges and ducks and an occasional *dijker*,

or small deer. Bush fires were, however, very common occurrences, and one afternoon, which I was spending at Government House, our attention was attracted by one which seemed to be on a larger scale than usual. In the distance we could see the flames leaping up to the heavens, while dense masses of smoke were coming down on the wind. Strange figures were visible in the skies, and vast armies of men appeared to be moving. The red light of the setting sun seemed to bathe the country as if in blood. It was an impressive but terrifying scene which perhaps had its counterpart more than once in the Great War. My companion, Miss Shippard, and I went out of the house, and walked in the direction of the great fire, which seemed to have the power to draw us on towards it. Presently its violence abated and there was only the red afterglow of the sunset, which mingled with the smoke, creating new and changing portents in the sky. We wandered on for a considerable distance, fascinated by the spectacle, and, night coming on, we suddenly realized that we were lost. Engrossed in the great fire we had walked on without sense of time or direction, and now, though we did not know it, it was hopeless to attempt to find our way back. Each little path that we took led to nowhere. Lights that we thought we saw proved illusory, and the night grew darker and darker. When we had wandered for some hours and were tired, we realized the futility of trying to find the way, so we lay down and, making a pillow of some long grass, waited for the dawn. Meanwhile our absence had been noted at Government House, and Sir Sidney, after waiting dinner for some time, at length ate his in solitude, and then sent for the officer commanding the police, who turned out his troopers to scour the country for us. Strangely enough, they never found us, but at early dawn, bedraggled and weary, we returned to learn that not only Government House, but the whole township, was in alarm. My cousin, Major Gosling, who was engaged to, and shortly to be married to, Miss Shippard, had passed a harassing and anxious night looking for us, and when he saw me his temper was none of the sweetest. He called me a damned fool, and I forgave him, for I felt he was right.

I had never really recovered my health since my mishap on the march down from Bulawayo, and I was far from strong. On the top of this I strained myself rather severely in the groin, trying to keep on Jeanette's back on one of her bad days, and foolishly refrained from lying up and resting as I should have done. Soon, however, I was forced to take to my bed, for an abscess formed, and, being treated by the same doctor who killed poor Quinn, I nearly fell a victim to a similar fate. Indeed, I was in a very bad way when my friends decided to send me to

Cape Town for treatment in the hospital there. One of these friends took me down and looked after me, for I was too weak to do anything for myself. It was not altogether a pleasant journey, for I suffered a good deal of pain, but fortunately the jolting of the train burst the abscess, which relieved me so much that I felt pretty sprightly when I reached Cape Town hospital, and not a little disgusted when the doctor, after examination, declared that an immediate operation was necessary. So I was put to bed, given a minimum of food, and appeared the next morning on the operating table, and awoke after chloroform to find myself in bed, my abscess duly opened and scraped. No private room being available, I had to go into the general surgical ward, where I lay for five months. It was an experience which, though interesting, was not altogether soothing to the nerves. Every morning wounds were inspected and dressed by the doctors, and one was distressed by the loud cries and groans of the sufferers. Many of them were big, burly workmen and mechanics, and I was surprised to see with how little fortitude they bore their pain. At first I could not sleep at night, owing to the snoring of my twenty odd fellow-patients, but gradually one became used to it. Deaths were, of course, frequent, and I always felt that I knew when the Angel of Death entered the ward by the momentary hush and stillness. On these occasions screens were put round the body, and sounds of the last toilet were audible to all of us. As a rule, death came easily, but I remember one case of an avowed atheist who was an unconscionable time dying. A clergyman sat by his bed reading the scriptures and exhorting him to accept the faith, but without avail, for he died protesting his disbelief in Christianity and the world to come. In the cot next to mine was a boy who had been blinded as the result of some accident in a factory. He was constantly asking the nurses to bring him the "eye oculist." Poor fellow! no eye doctor would ever give him back his sight.

I had been so run down in health that my wound, which was somewhat deep and extensive, would not heal, and to induce a healthy action it had to be scarified every morning with a stick of nitrate of silver. This treatment was decidedly unpleasant, and as it seemed unproductive of any good result I did not look forward to it. Finally, however, the head surgeon, who had been on leave in England, returned and changed my treatment, with the result that I improved and was allowed to be wheeled out on to the veranda, which overlooked the bay and where we had the distraction of watching the ships coming and going. My companion here was a Major Bushman, who was dying, and who knew it. Poor fellow! he was still a young man and clung to

life, and was always saying how he envied me because I was going to live. He died just after I left the hospital, and was given a military funeral, which I attended.

I found the matron and nurses all very kind—too kind almost, for they wanted to do too much, and their attentions were sometimes embarrassing. My nurse was the daughter of an English bishop, and she told me that the punishment she and her colleagues most feared was to be sent to the women's ward. She was a handsome and attractive girl.

A good many Dutch families, who heard through Miss Shippard that I was in hospital, came to see me on visitors' days, bringing flowers and fruit, and I have grateful memories of their kindness.

At last the happy day came and the doctors pronounced my wound, though not quite closed, sufficiently healed for me to leave. They told me, however, not to take any violent exercise or ride for at least six months—good advice which I did not take, for I was on horseback a few days after.

CHAPTER XIII

IN THREE CONTINENTS

I HAD now come to the conclusion that South Africa was not a lucky country for me, and I determined to go home. First, however, I decided to accept the invitation of some friends who had visited me in hospital, to stay with them outside Cape Town, as I hoped to pick up my strength before starting on my journey, which, owing to lack of funds, I was obliged to make in the steerage. On the night before leaving I was present at a ball given by the Governor, the late Sir Henry Loch, and I wondered if the lynx eye of the A.D.C. would spot my name on the following day among the list of third-class passengers. I needn't have worried, however, for probably Government House had seen many guests who subsequently left South Africa in the same humble way as myself.

In London I was able to replenish my funds and to have a very pleasant fortnight, as an offset to the rather trying nature of my last months in South Africa. What a delightful place London was in the 'nineties! There was gaiety without vulgarity, and men and women looked, and were, distinguished. No horrible taxis hooted, shaking and jolting through the streets; in their place were smart hansoms with a bit of blood between the shafts, and the driver with his grey topper and a handsome button-hole in his coat. How well those fellows drove their often queer-tempered nags, as often as not cast off from a racing stable. With what courtesy and politeness you were met by all classes. Tailors and hosiers gave unlimited credit, and were indeed offended if you offered them cash, though I must say that I never gave any cause for offence on this score. It was a golden age, and one can only pity the present generation who knew it not, and will probably never know anything like it. But I never found idleness pleasant, except for a short time, and being anxious to see my family and discuss with my father what profession I should take up, I decided to go out to Guatemala, where he was still stationed as minister.

As I wished to have a glimpse of the United States I took a ship for New York, where I spent a few days at the old Windsor Hotel, which was subsequently destroyed by fire, and treated myself to various American delicacies, such as blue point oysters "in the half share," clams, and "planked shad." I had no acquaintances in New York and brought no letters of introduction

with me, so I contented myself during my brief stay in wandering about the great city and studying life from this standpoint. Having thus satisfied my curiosity, I took train for the South, and after a long, dusty, but interesting journey I arrived at New Orleans, where I put up at an old-fashioned but very comfortable and spacious hotel. I found New Orleans a most delightful and attractive town, and having, I can scarcely recollect how, made acquaintance with one or two families, had every reason to appreciate the far-famed Southern hospitality. From New Orleans I took passage in a small coasting vessel, which carried me, without any event of interest to relate, to Port Livingston, where, as it may be remembered, I had spent some days a few years previously while on my way to Honduras. Here I hired mules, and after a journey of ten days reached Guatemala.

However, I found that my father was just on the point of leaving for England, and as I was anxious to see more of Central America I decided to remain.

As my funds were again low it was fortunate for me that I received an offer carrying with it a comfortable salary. This was to take charge of the Mint in the Republic of Salvador, during the absence for six months in England of the manager. The Mint was an English concern, engaged in minting gold and silver coins for that country, and though nobody could know less of minting than I did the work promised to be interesting, and I did not hesitate to accept it. I accordingly took steamer for the port of Salvador, which was only a journey of a day and a half, and then rode over to the capital, where the Mint was situated.

I soon found out that my duty as deputy master of the Mint was to cultivate pleasant relations with the Government of the country, and, above all, to prevent the employees of various nationalities engaged in cutting and stamping the coins from stealing and pilfering. To assist me in this work I had the services of two Englishmen, who acted as analyser and book-keeper respectively. They were good fellows both, Holmes and Andrews, and instead of showing jealousy at my being put over their heads they helped me in the most loyal manner possible and in every way they could.

The climate of Salvador was very hot, and consequently we began to work at 4.30 in the morning. This, however, enabled us to finish early in the afternoon, and after five our time was our own.

Salvador was a typical small Spanish town which offered little scope for amusement. There were a few pleasant native families on whom one called, and the band played every evening on the

Plaza, and here one walked and met one's friends. Some pony-racing, which I and a few enthusiasts got up on the Campo de Marte close to the town, was fairly successful, and a curious lop-eared, three-cornered animal which I bought beat everything that was brought against him. I called this pony *El Cuño*, which means "The Mint" in Spanish, and rode him myself in all his races.

This amusement was, however, brought to an end by a sudden and violent epidemic of yellow fever which broke out in the town and carried off many friends and acquaintances, to whose almost daily funerals one went as a matter of course, though at that time it was believed that the disease was in the highest degree contagious. Every day brought the news of fresh deaths, and the virulence of the malady was such that I did not hear of anyone recovering. There was, however, one exception to this rule, namely, myself. One morning I awoke with the most splitting headache I had ever known. I tried to carry on my usual work at the Mint, but was obliged to give it up and lie down. I got worse and felt as if I were out, abandoned and without shelter in the midst of a raging tornado. I remember no more till I came to my senses and saw three doctors standing outside my room. They seemed to me a very long distance away, but I distinctly heard one of them say, "You had better tell them to order his coffin." This statement didn't shock me, for I was just fluttering between life and death, but quite happy and contented, with no particular wish to live. The third doctor said, "Why not try an injection of ether; he may yet have some powers of resistance." The others shrugged their shoulders, but Gasteazoro—for that was the doctor's name—was interested in me, for I had ridden a pony of his to victory in the races. He ran home for the ether, and after an injection I sat up. On the next day I asked for food, and then followed a long and wearisome convalescence, for the disease had shaken me a good deal. As soon as I was well enough they showed me my obituary notice in the local papers, for my two pessimistic doctors, regardless of the opinion of their third colleague, had announced my death publicly on leaving my bedside. Translated from Spanish the notice ran as follows :

"The death occurred last night in this city of Mr. Cecil Gosling, a victim of yellow fever. The deceased was the son of the British Minister to Central America, and was popular in our society. A great lover of sport, he was one of the jockeys who most distinguished himself in the races of last June. He served as a soldier in the British Army in South Africa, where he went through the Matabele campaign."

During my illness, I had been most devoutly nursed by Holmes, our assayer, who had not hesitated to run what was then believed to be the great risk of the contagion of yellow fever, and to him I no doubt mainly owe my recovery. He continued his kindly attentions during my convalescence, and finally got me so far that I was able to take ship to New York and London.

On arrival I joined my family at Bournemouth, where the warm winter climate greatly favoured my recovery. During my stay my father received a letter from the late Sir Eric Barrington offering me the post of Vice-Consul at Havana, which I agreed to accept, though Cuba was in those days hardly a very salubrious spot. I learnt, moreover, that my two predecessors at the post had each died in turn of yellow fever within a short while of each other, and that the Foreign Office had found some difficulty in filling the post. Though I was not at all anxious to enter the Consular Service, Yellow Jack had now no terrors for me, for one can't have it twice, and yielding to the persuasions of my father and mother I finally agreed to accept the appointment. In those days entry to the Consular Service was by nomination and a subsequent qualifying examination, which I successfully passed, and on my appointment set sail for Havana, the capital of the Island of Cuba.

In the year 1896 Cuba was still a colony of Spain, and one of the last relics of her former Colonial Empire. At the time of my arrival there the Cubans were in arms against the Spanish Government, and the revolt finally culminated in the Spanish-American war and the independence of the island.

Our Consul-General was Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alexander Gollan, who had been for many years resident in Spanish and Latin American posts. He was a handsome, burly, bearded Scotchman of close on sixty, a first-rate official, and one of the kindest and most considerate chiefs that a youngster could well have. As I have already said, my two predecessors had fallen victims within a short time of each other to yellow fever, with the result that my chief's leave, through having had no one to replace him, was much overdue. As soon, therefore, as I mastered the routine of work he sailed for England, leaving me in charge at a juncture in the affairs of the island which was responsible and interesting.

Havana in those days was a city in which even the elements of hygiene were unknown. There was no drainage system, and refuse from the houses was placed outside in the street every evening to be carted away early the next morning. The result was, of course, a heavy death-roll among the population, and a variety of the most appalling stinks which the survivors were forced to inhale.

An English doctor, Finlay by name, had for long been resident and in practice at Havana. He was a shy, retiring little man, whose modesty prevented him from enjoying that fame in the medical world to which he was in reality entitled; for Finlay was the first to discover the real character of yellow fever and that it was due to infection by the anopheles mosquito, and Professor Koch, to whom the credit of this discovery is generally given, merely utilized and elaborated the theory of his English colleague.

For many years Dr. Finlay had been in the habit of treating arrivals in Cuba by infecting them with a mild dose of yellow fever through the bite of the anopheles mosquito, which subsequently rendered them immune to the greater severity of the disease itself. On my arrival he called on me and proposed treating me in this manner, but I told him that I was already through with the dreaded *Vomito negro*, and that his treatment was happily unnecessary. Nevertheless, I saw much of the doctor and his family, who were very kind to me during my stay in Cuba.

Another friend of mine was an old man who was wealthy and held a good position in the English community, but who was stated to have been a pirate in his youth. He was a great disbeliever in all doctors, and told me that in the good old days, when there were none in the island, yellow fever was looked upon as a disease which every new-comer had to go through, but that it was very rarely fatal. A black "mammy" was sent for as soon as the malady declared itself, and the patient was liberally dosed with castor-oil and lemon-juice, and after a few days was on the mend. I dare say my friend the pirate was right.

General Weyler, Marquis of Tenerife, was Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Cuba, and busily occupied at this time in suppressing the revolution. A good soldier and disciplinarian, his methods were severe and drastic, but not more so than the duties of his position demanded. He had Teutonic blood in his veins, his grandfather having been a German. At the time of my taking charge of the Consulate-General he was engaged in a strong offensive against the rebels, and he had his prisoners shot, after trial, without mercy. The executions, which were public, took place on a Sunday, the condemned men being led through the main streets on their way to the Morro Fortress. Spaniards and their Latin American descendants almost always die game, and the rebels I saw being escorted through the streets were chatting with their guards and smoking cigarettes in a most nonchalant manner. The windows and balconies of the houses in the streets through which they were led were crowded

with men and gaily-dressed women, and these highly tragic events were regarded in the light of a *fiesta*. Spaniards have many fine qualities, but they are strangely indifferent to suffering and death. It is not, however, so long ago that fashionable people in England thronged to see a criminal hanged, and that Thackeray himself attended an execution, which he described in words which fill the reader with horror. Nor have I the right to criticize, for shortly after my arrival in Havana I attended the garrotting of three bandits.

George Borrow, in "The Bible in Spain," describes a similar execution, and I found the reality no less terrible. The three men were marched out to a fort near the city surrounded by a moat. They were youngish men, all three; and had been the terror of the country-side, where they had committed a series of brutal murders. One could not therefore feel the slightest sympathy for them, or think that their sentence was other than just. They marched along in front of their guards, their ankles and legs manacled. Across the moat, which was narrow and waterless, was placed a plank to serve as bridge. Two of the men, in spite of the manacles, coolly jumped over the moat, while the third more sedately crossed on the plank. The first criminal was seated in the chair provided and the iron collar adjusted to his neck, while the priest in attendance recited prayers in a loud resolute voice. The executioner then turned a handle, and one heard, or thought one heard, the breaking of the bones of the neck, while the body of the wretched malefactor twitched convulsively. The two other criminals watched this dreadful sight with apparent calm. The second took his place in the chair with courage and apparent indifference; but the third, who had watched the dooin and suffering of his comrades, was much shaken, and his face had turned a livid green. He was assisted to the chair and collapsed, inert, thereon. Whether his condition rendered more difficult the adjustment of the collar I cannot say, but he took longer to die than the others, and his ineffectual struggles and contortions were dreadful to witness. It was a horrible sight, and for many days I regretted having gone to see it.

The revolution, in spite of the stern measures of General Weyler, had spread, until practically the whole of the island population had taken up arms in what they believed to be the cause of liberty. The Cuban families of Havana lived in terror of arrest, or even death, for complicity, supposed or real, with the deeds of their sons or brothers who had taken the field against the Spanish forces. In one case a young and beautiful girl, well-known in Society, determined to penetrate into the rebel lines to bring back her lover. She set forth on horseback, found

him, and finally induced him—such is the power of a woman's beauty—to abandon the cause and return with her to Havana.

The pair got away safely, but after some hours were discovered and chased by a Spanish patrol, but, being well mounted, could easily have out-distanced their pursuers, mounted on poorly fed animals, had it not been—as ill luck would have it—that the lady's horse put his foot in a hole and fell, stunning his rider. The man, of course, remained with her, and both were captured, brought to Havana, and eventually sentenced to death. The families of both were not only influential but wealthy, and strong influence was brought to bear for a mitigation of their sentence, which, it was said, Cristina, then Queen-Regent of Spain, favoured. But it was of no avail, and one day the lovers were taken out and shot.

Under such conditions, it may be easily understood that one saw but little of social life in Havana. Still a few people received after dinner, in the cool of the evenings, amongst them being Count and Countess Fernandina, who had two charming daughters and whose house was a rendezvous for the most interesting and distinguished people on the island.

The two secretaries of the Governor-General, with whom I had to do officially, were the Marques de Palmerola and the Marques de Ahumada. The latter was one of the handsomest men I have ever seen, and looked like a portrait by Velasquez come to life. In more important matters I dealt direct with General Weyler, who was always very courteous, and usually ended my interview by offering me a glass of wine made on his estates on Tenerife. On one occasion two Englishmen, owners of sugar plantations, were arrested by the Spaniards for complicity with the rebels, and matters looked serious for them, as, if not actually guilty of the charge, their conduct had at least been very indiscreet. I found it impossible to obtain their release through either Palmerola or Ahumada, and General Weyler was away leading his troops in action, so that I was powerless for the moment to help my countrymen. A few days later, however, learning that General Weyler had had a successful brush with the enemy and was returning to Havana, I determined to saddle up my horse and ride out to meet him. I had a paper from the authorities which enabled me to pass the sentries outside the town, and after about an hour I met the General riding at the head of his troops and surrounded by his staff. He recognized me at once, and made place for me at his side, at the same time expressing his surprise at seeing me abroad at this time of day, when the sun was still high. I replied that I wished to be the first to offer His Excellency my congratulations on his achieve-

ment in the field. He replied suitably, and we rode back to the town together. On reaching the palace the General asked me to come in and have a glass of wine with him. The "Tenerife" was palatable and well iced, and when we had reached our second glass I suddenly, and without warning, asked my host to release my two compatriots. The Governor was quite taken by surprise, but Spanish courtesy came to my assistance, and before taking leave, I had the satisfaction of seeing the secretary draft out a telegram for their release.

There was not much in the way of sport in the neighbourhood of Havana, and even riding was not very attractive, as the roads were bad and deep in dust. I found, however, a little fishing in the streams in the vicinity. They were beautifully clear and the fish correspondingly shy, but I caught several of a species known as "lisa," a silvery fish not unlike a grayling, on an imitation prawn. They were very game, and, as the current was strong, afforded capital sport. The house where I lived was an old-fashioned one, and through the grounds ran what in Spanish is called an *acequia*—a sort of magnified drain. One day—it was a Sunday—in an idle way, having nothing to do, I put my rod together and, baiting my hook, dabbled it from my bedroom window in these turgid waters. To my intense surprise I felt an immediate tug, and pulled out a fish weighing about a quarter of a pound and in appearance something like a roach. In half an hour I caught nearly a dozen of them, and presented the basket to my landlady's servants, who declared them excellent eating.

Another Sunday amusement was to take the train for about an hour to a sea-bathing place called Marianao. The water was warm and bracingly salt, and there were stated to be no sharks in this little land-locked bay, or, at any rate, the fishermen were supposed to give the bathers warning if any had been seen. I am exceedingly frightened of sharks, and I didn't think the precautions taken adequate; and one day I was confirmed in my doubts, for, diving, I ran into a large fish while under water, and though I could not distinguish him very well, by his size he could only have been a shark. Fortunately, however, the fish was as frightened as I was, and we each darted away in opposite directions, he for the deep and I for the shore, which I reached safely, but trembling all over. After this I gave up sea bathing. At other times I hired a boat and sailed about Havana Bay, but I was so persistently followed by a large shark that he too, in conjunction with the evil smell of the water, got on my nerves.

My chief, who had now returned from England, very kindly

suggested that I should make a journey into the interior in order to report officially on the sugar industry and the conditions obtaining generally under the revolution. Mr. Akers, the "Times" correspondent, who was also interested in the same manner, accompanied me, and together we visited the towns of Matanzas, Cardenas, Cienfuegos, Santiago, and Guantanamo by rail, making excursions on horseback from these towns to the various sugar factories. Travelling by rail was a somewhat uncertain means of locomotion, as the rebels often attempted to blow up the trains by means of bombs. On one occasion we had a narrow escape, our carriage being destroyed, and the train brought to a standstill and fired at from a neighbouring wood. We managed, however, to get away safely. Nor was travelling on horseback very secure, for one risked capture by the rebels, and robbery and probably murder on the part of the numerous independent bands of brigands who infested the country-side. In the town of Santiago we met Richard Harding Davies, the well-known American writer and journalist.

I was not sorry to return to Havana, as I found the heat on our trip very exhausting, and was suffering from mild malaria, which presently grew worse. Fortunately I was due for leave, and as soon as this was granted I left for Europe in a French steamer, arriving in England in a very shaky condition with a face the colour of a lemon, and so weak that I could with difficulty get about.

After spending my leave, the Foreign Office, perhaps fearing that I should be the third Vice-Consul to succumb to the climate of Havana, appointed me to Hamburg, and thither I accordingly proceeded.

Since my early boyhood I had not resided for any length of time in Europe, and life in Northern Germany was therefore a great change for me. I liked it in some ways, but in others I found it narrow after the liberty I had enjoyed in sunnier climes. The work at the Consulate-General was very heavy, and I was usually on duty from nine in the morning to eight in the evening. This left very little time for sport or amusement, but I made friends with a German, a Herr Hasberg, who kept a small racing stable, and who very kindly allowed me to ride his horses for exercise at six in the mornings. It was rather a chilly business mounting a shivering thoroughbred with his back up, but it gave me exercise and kept me fit. The Hussar regiment stationed at Wandsbeck ran a drag, which I followed regularly twice a week on an old and somewhat groggy steeplechase horse which I had bought. The drag gave good sport, for hounds ran fast and the country was by no means easy with high banks, posts,

and rails, which sometimes brought me and others to grief. The officers of the regiment, "The Queen Wilhelmine's Hussars," were keen riders, though they were all poor men; he who had an allowance of fifty pounds a year from his parents was accounted rich, and they were most of them well mounted. I was very frequently invited to mess with the regiment, the food being very plain but well cooked. During dinner an ordinary wine was served, and with dessert we had sweet German champagne. One could not but admire their simplicity and economy, which allowed officers without means to serve in a crack regiment, and to live comfortably on their pay. In November, on St. Hubertus' Day, there was a point-to-point race, finishing up over the steeplechase course at Horn; and in the last year of my stay at Hamburg I rode in this event a clever Irish mare called Lucy, the property of Lan & Oppenheimer, the dealers. She gave me a beautiful ride over rather a stiff course of four miles, and finished third. She might, I dare say, have won if her rider had been more experienced.

There was plenty of social life in the town, and dinners were great affairs, lasting several hours, with an abundance of good dishes and famous wines, for in those days the cellars of Hamburg were celebrated and considered by epicures only second to those of Brussels. The senators—who were styled "Your Magnificence"—and the rich merchants vied with each other in choice and costly entertainments. A polo club was also started and became the head-quarters of the game in Germany. I became a member, though not a player, for my means would not permit of such an expensive luxury. But polo never became really popular in Germany, except among a few very rich people, as the officers and poorer sportsmen preferred steeplechasing and hunting.

In the year 1899 I went on leave, and while in London was offered the post of H.M. Consul to the Republic of Paraguay, which I accepted. Eric Barrington, who was then Private Secretary, and who offered me the appointment, told me that I should be sure to like it, for it was the Land of the Lotus Flower, and that I should read two books about the country, "The Cruise of the Falcon" and "Where Three Empires Meet." I took his advice and enjoyed them thoroughly.

When I took up my appointment I was twenty-nine years of age and the youngest consul in the Service.

I sailed on a comfortable Royal Mail Steamer for Monte Video, from which I transhipped to a paddle-boat going up the River Paraguay, and stopping at all the small river ports on the way. Our first halt of importance was at Rosario in the Argentine

Republic, where I went ashore. Even in those early days the town was of considerable commercial importance and a very busy place. The fish market interested me especially, for here were displayed some magnificent dorados, a golden fish, in shape and make like a salmon, though he is no relation to the *Salmonidæ*. He is, however, a wonderfully sporting fish, running up to thirty or forty pounds, or even more. Then there was the surubí, or tiger-fish, as big as a small shark, which is also game on a rod. The bagre, a cat-fish with long whiskers, which, when pulled out of the water makes a noise between the grunt of a pig and the bark of a dog. The reader may smile and think this is a fisherman's story, but it is a true one.

From Rosario the river becomes narrower and more interesting, for one is leaving the flat country, and on either side forests descend to the banks. They are tropical, but at a little distance look like well-kept parks, with tall and noble-looking trees standing on a grassy sward. As one travels onward navigation becomes more and more difficult, and the light draught vessel swings from one shore to the other, often so close that one can touch the trees with one's hand.

On the sandbanks of the river, yacares, or alligators, lie sunning themselves, but they imitate so exactly the colour of their surroundings that it is only when the eye is trained that one can distinguish them. They are usually small in size, not more than four or five feet. Occasionally a splash, bigger than that made by the leaping dorado, tells one that a carpincho, or water-pig, the largest of the rodents, has been frightened by the wash of the boat and taken refuge in the water, where he is as much at home as on land. The carpincho has two deadly enemies who threaten the extinction of this interesting and harmless beast—man and the jaguar. The former hunts him for his skin, which makes the best *sobre puesto*, or covering for the native saddle, being both soft and cool, and the latter because he is easily captured and offers a substantial meal. I am writing of twenty years ago, and I dare say that nowadays the carpincho is but seldom seen by passengers on the river steamers. In many open spaces of the marsh-lands the bird life is most abundant and interesting. Ducks, royal ducks, a magnificent species twice the ordinary size, snipe, and the chaja, a species of plover, which is nearly as large as a turkey and which has two blood-red spurs on its wings. A small water-bird, brilliantly coloured, something like a golden pheasant but with a splash of green to its plumage, is frequently seen picking its way delicately through the mud.

Picturesque sailing boats, schooners with graceful lines come

swinging down with the tide, laden to the top of their decks with Paraguayan oranges, which are famous for their exquisite flavour.

The journey up the river interested and fascinated me, and as our steamer rounded the red sandstone cliffs which command the approach to the town of Asuncion I felt happy that my fate had brought me to a pleasant land, as yet unspoiled by tourists and commercialism.

CHAPTER XIV

PARAGUAY: A SHORT HISTORICAL SURVEY

PARAGUAY is an inland State of South America, whose immediate neighbours are Argentine, Brazil, and Bolivia. The river of the same name divides Paraguay proper from the territory known as the Gran Chaco.

After a stormy history as a colony of Spain, Paraguay declared its independence in 1811, and was then successively governed by two tyrants, Francia and Solano Lopez, the first a stern but wise ruler, and the second a blood-thirsty madman, who brought ruin and desolation on his country.

The population was originally almost entirely composed of an indigenous race of Indians known as Guaranis, to which, after the conquest, a slight strain of Spanish blood was added. But the Spanish administration in Paraguay never really attained an effective control over the Guaranis, and the civilization and conversion to Christianity of this people was, almost wholly, the work of the Jesuits, who, in the seventeenth century, had acquired a predominant influence in the country.

In the Jesuit missions, which were really large cattle farms, numbers of the Paraguayan Indians were employed, and, apart from their conversion to Christianity, were instructed in the science of agriculture and in various industries.

The Spaniards attempted to force their language on the native Paraguayans, but the Jesuits, early realizing the importance of dealing with them through the medium of their own mode of speech, had made themselves masters of the Guaraní tongue, and to this is due to no small extent the secret of their success.

To an impartial mind there can be little doubt that the rule of the Jesuits in Paraguay was wise, humane, and just. It aroused, however, the jealousy and hostility of the Spanish administration, precisely because it was so wholly at variance with their own treatment of the native races of America, with the final result that, by order of the Court of Spain, the Jesuits were expelled from the country.

Shortly after this event South America became involved in the War of Independence, which finally resulted in the casting off of the Spanish yoke.

Paraguay declared its independence in 1811, and, after a brief period of internal turmoil, came under the firm and wise rule of Dr. Francia, one of the ablest statesmen of his day.

Dr. Francia has been depicted by the master of hand Carlyle, and it is only to be regretted that this attractive and delightful essay is marred by geographical errors, so gross as to make a modern schoolboy blush.

In the year 1899, when I arrived at Asuncion, the influence of the Dictator still survived, and indeed hung like a ghostly shadow over the land. I met several elderly people who had lived in his time, and they always spoke of him with bated breath. They never called him by his name, but spoke of him as "El Supremo"—the supreme one. An old man told me that twice a day, at dawn and at eventide, El Supremo, accompanied by his staff, rode out to inspect the town and its surroundings. At such a time no person was allowed to be in the streets; all, on perceiving the Presence, had to retire to their houses and remain behind closed doors. This old man also told me the following story: One morning, after a violent rainstorm in the night, Dr. Francia, taking his usual ride, halted at a suburb of the town, called Lambaré, where the violence of the downpour had washed away the soil from a burial-ground and exposed the human remains. After such rains, under the influence of the morning sun, flowers and plants spring up as if by magic in a night; and peeping through the sockets of a skull was a pale blue flower, called in Spanish *Ojos de Angel*, or Angel's Eyes. Reining in his horse before this emblem of mortality, the Dictator paused a moment in thought, and then, turning to his followers and pointing to the object of his meditation, said:

*Dichoso flor, que te vi nacer,
Cual infeliz fué tu suerte!
Que al paso que diste
Te encontraste con la muerte.*

*Si te cojo, es cosa fuerte,
Si te dejo, peor:
Pues dejarte con la vida,
Es dejarte con la muerte.*

Roughly translated into English, it runs something as follows:

Sweet flower, whose birth I saw,
How sad thy fate;
For in blooming thou hast met
Death face to face.

Sad it were to pluck thee,
Yet, to leave thee, worse.
For to leave thee with life
Is still to leave thee with death.

This anecdote shows the Dictator in a poetical vein, but his mood was usually a stern one. He had no use for incompetency in any form, and the punishment which he awarded for it was usually death, or, as he tersely put it, *cuatro balas*—four bullets.

As a result of the violent tropical storms of thunder and lightning followed by rain, most of the tile roofs in Asuncion leaked. But, as the same old man told me, tiled roofs in Francia's time, of which there were many still standing when I first knew the country, were perfectly watertight. The explanation of this, he told me, was that El Supremo issued an order that any workman making defective tiles would be shot, and that as a result the roofs soon ceased to leak.

Shortly after my arrival I rented a *quinta*, or country house, from an American dentist who, after having made his money, was leaving the country. The house was situated just outside the town in an avenue shaded by orange-trees, and was a comfortable bungalow with a wide balcony which caught the cool breezes of early morning and of evening. The roof was of tiles, which, as they were not of the time of Francia, leaked, I regret to say, a good deal. The house stood well back in a garden plentifully stocked with fruit-trees of every kind, from oranges, sweet as honey, Persian lemons, limes, and Paradise apples to loquats and *jocotes*, a species of tropical plum. There was, moreover, a wealth of flowering shrubs—scarlet hybiscus, magnolia, jasmine, bougainvillia, and even honeysuckle, with flowers as sweet and scent even more fragrant than in Europe. The Spanish name for it is *Madre Selva*—the Mother of the Forest. At the back of the house was a large field where maize and alfalfa for the horses was growing, and some vegetables for the kitchen. Later on I made a riding school in this field and put up some hurdles, a stone wall, and two or three ditches, over which I trained my horses. The heat during the day was terrific, but by getting up before sunrise I managed to put in an hour in the saddle, and another hour gardening before breakfast, and this gave me the morning and afternoon to attend to my official duties, which were by no means of an arduous nature.

At noon, when the heat was at its greatest, I followed the custom of the country and took a siesta. In the evening, before dinner, I again went for a ride. This was the pleasantest hour of the day; and as one cantered along the deep red, sandy roads the soft breezes of sunset was heavy with the odours of jasmine and the many other sweet-smelling flowers. My favourite ride was through the lanes which lay at the back of the town, of which the hedges were formed by scarlet hybiscus, the golden *isipo* and the deep purple blossoms of the passion flower. Here the poorer

classes of the Paraguayans had their dwellings, little mud huts containing two or perhaps three rooms. Past these houses the road led up a steep ascent, from which, on reaching the summit, one could contemplate the town lying below and the broad river flowing between apparently endless expanses of dense forest-land.

When the old men and women of Asuncion mentioned Francia they spoke, as I have said, in terms of awe, but also of deep respect. Their attitude towards their second tyrant, Lopez, was a very different one, for they remembered him only with horror and loathing, though they were proud of the gallantry of their soldiers in the desperate war waged against the combined forces of Argentine and Brazil.

Francisco Solano Lopez succeeded his father as President in the year 1862. From the first years of his reign he displayed an acute form of megalomania, which developed later into fiendish cruelty and lust for blood. His mistress, Mrs. Lynch, seems to have been his aider and abettor in his worst crimes ; possibly she was the instigator of many of them. This lady, whom Lopez picked up in some music-hall during a visit he made to Paris in his youth, was the wife of Captain Lynch, an Irish officer. She returned with Lopez to Asuncion, and on his appointment to the presidency lived with him as his wife. Many of the best families in Asuncion, however, refused to attend her balls and routs, and thereby no doubt laid up for themselves trouble and persecution in the years to come. Evidence goes to show that Lopez, encouraged and supported by his ambitious and unscrupulous mistress, had conceived the fantastic plan of declaring himself Emperor of South America, and in anticipation of this event had ordered his crown in Paris from a jeweller in the Rue de la Paix. This alone shows that he was hopelessly insane.

Portraits of these days show him as a coarse-looking, thickset man, half Indian and half Spaniard, whose brutal and besotted features are partially concealed by a thick matted growth of beard. Mrs. Lynch appears as a thin, hard-faced woman, with apparently no sort of pretensions to good looks.

War between Paraguay and Argentine and Brazil broke out in 1864, and for five years the Paraguayans put up a most gallant fight against wholly superior odds. Some of their exploits, as, for instance, the defence of Hunaita, are fit to rank among the heroic deeds of war. But the Dictator took no part in the leadership of his troops, and was, indeed, loath to expose his life in the fighting. With the exception of occasional visits to the lines he remained in Asuncion, where he now commenced an orgy of crime which has made his name infamous in South American history. Men and women were seized on the merest

suspicion of hostility to his person and were tortured and flogged often to death, or if they did not die under the lash they were shot. Pancha Garmandia, a young and beautiful girl who had refused his advances, was thus flogged to death. He flogged his own mother, imprisoned his sisters, and no one was safe from his inhuman instincts. In this conduct he was supported by his ministers, who were, of course, only his tools, and by Madame Lynch, who was now in a position to avenge herself on persons of both sexes who had, in her opinion, failed in respect towards her. One of Lopez's strong supporters was a priest named Padre Maiz, who was at the same time his chief torturer.

Later I shall have more to say of that terrible Padre Maiz. As might be expected, Lopez showed no mercy to his officers in the field. At one time all unsuccessful commanders were brought to Asuncion and shot without court martial. But in the last years of the war senior officers had become so scarce that it became necessary to be more sparing with them.

The war dragged on for five years, until at last the man-power of Paraguay was completely exhausted. In the last phase the army was manned by children from twelve to fourteen years of age, who nevertheless fought with invincible ardour and gallantry. In the end, overcome by numbers, the Paraguayan army was completely routed, and Lopez with a few followers fled from Asuncion. They were pursued by Brazilian cavalry, and in a marsh near Cerro Corà Lopez was unhorsed, and while lying prostrate in the mud, met his death at the hands of a Brazilian lancer. His death was an act of retribution, and no Paraguayan, however patriotic, either mourned or regretted his fate, or failed to acknowledge that one of the most repugnant figures of contemporary South American history had at last met his deserts. At the close of this terrible war what had been a smiling and fertile country was desolate and laid to waste, the population had fallen from 800,000 to 450,000, and consisted mainly of women and children, and a very few old men were still living. The jaguars had become so used to the taste of human flesh that they no longer feared human beings, and so bold were they that they would enter the houses to seize their prey.

Among the most interesting people I met in Asuncion were Dr. Stewart and his family, who lived in a beautiful house standing in an English-looking park, which was situated not far from my own house.

Dr. Stewart, who came out to Paraguay as a very young Scotch doctor, had had the somewhat doubtful and delicate privilege of being body surgeon to Lopez during the whole of the war, and that he survived these stirring events must be attributed to his good

luck, courage, and sterling qualities, which impressed even that tyrant. As it was, he told me that he never moved without a dose of poison in his waistcoat pocket, to take in case he saw that the game was up, and that he was next on the list for torture and execution. When I met Dr. Stewart he was a man of about sixty, but in robust health, and his hair and beard, originally bright red in colour, had only started to go white. His was a familiar figure on the roads, seated on an old piebald horse, going the round of his patients. Mrs. Stewart, who was a descendant of a noble Spanish family, was, when I knew her, a tall, elegant woman with traces of considerable beauty. She too had passed through tragic days during the war. Unknown to her husband, and during his absence from Asuncion, she had been ordered by Lopez to leave the city and to follow the army in company with a number of unfortunate Paraguayan ladies, who had in some way incurred the Dictator's enmity or excited his suspicion in those dreadful days. Then a young and beautiful woman, Mrs. Stewart followed the troops in their forced marches, attacks, and retreats, sharing all the hardships of the men. Finally, when the women became an encumbrance, Lopez gave the order to his soldiers to butcher them. The lives of Mrs. Stewart and of most of the companions of her own sex were, however, providentially saved as if by a miracle, for, at the moment when Lopez's order was about to be executed, a charge of Brazilian cavalry, headed by the Comte d'Eu, completely routed the Paraguayans, and placed the ladies in the safe custody of their deliverers, who treated them with the kindness which their destitution and sufferings so well merited. They were sent back to Asuncion, where Mrs. Stewart was united with her husband, whom she had not seen for over two years. Dr. Stewart told me this story himself, and his simple words made one none the less realize the horror that these people had gone through. He was a wealthy man, owning large properties in different parts of the country. These were administered by his three sons, whom I only knew slightly as they seldom found time to make a journey to Asuncion. There were as well two daughters, who did the honours of the doctor's house most agreeably, and at sunset I often rode round for a chat and a cocktail and to listen to stories of Paraguay in the early days.

Amongst other acquaintances I had in Asuncion were the two sons of Lopez, who figured vaguely in politics and were connected with the Press. Their mother was Mrs. Lynch, but they showed no signs of foreign blood and were quite Paraguayan in appearance. Nevertheless, it was interesting to me to note that they spoke English with considerable fluency, and must have learnt it at their redoubtable mother's knee.

The President of Paraguay at the period of my arrival in the country was General Ecurra, a dark-faced man who barely spoke Spanish, Guarani being the only language he was really at home in, as I clearly saw during the several interviews I had with His Excellency. He was a common enough type of the South American soldier-ruler of these days, who vaguely and vainly sought to imitate Napoleon I in outward show. Owing to his swarthy complexion, people made play on his name and called him "Oscuro," which means "dark."

Another political figure of these days was General Bernardino Cavallero, a former President, who lived in a most beautiful country-house situated almost in the centre of the town, and of which the grounds extended right down to the river. He was an old man when I knew him, perhaps seventy, of fair complexion and blue eyes, and owned some of the best-looking horses in the place. I used often to meet him in the evenings, at the hour of the bath, ambling along on some good-looking nag whose saddle and reins were heavily ornamented with silver, and surrounded by his bodyguard of picked soldiers, all in uniform. In his beautiful home he lived a patriarchal life, surrounded by a large family and innumerable children by various ladies of his household, who seemed quite happy together.

CHAPTER XV

ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS

OTHER Paraguayans with whom I was on friendly terms were the two brothers Calisto and José Gil, who were landowners and picturesque people, affecting the Gaucho costume, saddles and bridles heavily embossed with chased silver, and huge clanking spurs of the same metal. They both claimed English blood, as indeed their name indicated, but were dark and swarthy and entirely Paraguayan in appearance. José Gil became later a famous *Caudillo*, or rebel leader, and played an adventurous part, of which I shall have more to say later.

Politics were then comparatively simple; there were only two opposing parties, the "Reds" and the "Blues," corresponding to Conservatives and Liberals. To distinguish themselves, the former wore red handkerchiefs round their necks, and the latter blue ones, of silk or cotton according to the degree of wealth of the wearer. The peons, or working men, all wore a distinguishing scarf, though, as the Reds were then strongly in power, it was not safe to flaunt the colours of the opposing party, and any man who did so, risked his life. None the less, I had a groom who wore a blue handkerchief ostentatiously, but perhaps he thought himself safe under the shadow of His Majesty's Consulate.

José Gil was a Red of the reds, and when I rode out with him he wore a beautiful silk scarf loosely tied round the neck, so that when he galloped the ends of it floated out on the wind and made him, with his fine poncho and richly ornamented horse-gear, a very picturesque figure.

The British colony was not numerous, but I had two English friends who lived out in the "Camp," as the country is called in Anglo-Paraguayan parlance, whom I visited frequently and who stayed with me when they came to town.

The first of these was Leonard Talbot, who was working on a cattle ranch in the Chaco owned by an Italian. Talbot was a handsome Englishman, tall, dark, magnificently proportioned, with well-cut features. I fancy that he had been rather wild at home and that circumstances in England had been too narrow for his spirits. When he first came to Paraguay he was somewhat quarrelsome and often too ready with his fists, but he soon settled down in his new life and became a good cowboy and cattleman. When the war came he was one of the very first to take passage for home to enlist; his only fear was that he would

be too late, and that the war would be over before he got there. He was sent to France, rose quickly to commissioned rank, and, after earning the highest reputation for gallantry, fell on the field of honour.

My other friend, George Box, was, or rather had been, a rolling stone, for when I knew him he was a man of over sixty, and had stopped rolling to settle down in Paraguay, where he had bought a small property. George started his travels young, and had been everywhere and tried most trades and employments. He had been a cowboy in Texas, a policeman in New York, a gold miner in California, and a soldier in Mexico, where he had met that delightful author of our boyhood, Mayne Reid, whom he described as rather an ordinary little fellow, fond of listening over the camp fire to tales told about the Indians. George Box had also been a ticket collector on the Buenos Ayres trams, but was dismissed, so he said, for letting the good-looking ladies travel free. In appearance he was strikingly handsome, and in spite of his white, carefully trimmed vandyke beard was as active in the saddle or tramping the country with his gun as a young man. He had bought some land near the town of Villa Rica, and I often visited him there and enjoyed a few days' shooting, for it was good ground for both snipe and partridges. He lived in a fair-sized *adobe*, or mud house, which consisted of two rooms and a kitchen. The half-open apartment served as a dining-room and the second as a bedroom, where he and his guests slept. Though never the worse for drink, my friend was fond of his glass, and to my amusement, when, as was often the case, he woke up at two or three in the morning, he used to fill himself half a tumbler of rum, drink it off, murmur some words of satisfaction, and then fall asleep again. He was fond, too, of giving dances for the peons about the place and their women. These festivities generally took place about twice a week or so, and rather interfered with the working of the farm. They were also the cause of no little expense to my friend, who had to provide a quantity of rum for the men and *vino seco*, a kind of rough sherry, for the ladies. Among the former was a rather good-looking Gaucho with one arm, and curiosity impelled me one day to ask him how he had lost it.

"In a fight with a fellow near here," was the reply; adding "He gave me such a *puñalada* that it cut through the bone, and, seeing that the wound would not heal and that my arm was useless, I saddled my horse and rode off to Villa Rica to see the English doctor." This was a distance of some fifty miles.

"And what did the doctor do?" I inquired.

"Oh," said the Gaucho, "after examining my wound he said,

‘Look at that fine horse passing up the street,’ and as I looked he whipped out a pen-knife and cut off my arm.”

“Did it hurt?” I said.

“Hardly at all, *pero es muy diablo, este doctor*” (“but he is a regular devil, that doctor”).

Such was the man’s light-hearted way of describing an experience that would most likely have killed a European. But the Gauchos have nerves of iron, and they are nearly as indifferent to their own sufferings as to the sufferings of others. The doctor referred to was Bottrell, an Englishman who had established himself in the town of Villa Rica, and had a large practice among the Paraguayans, with whom he was very popular.

The Paraguayans of these days when I first arrived in the country were a happy people whose tastes were simple and their wants few. During the reigns of both Francia and Lopez their country had been almost entirely isolated from the outside world, and even now they had practically no knowledge of lands other than their own. People who had made even so simple a journey as that to Buenos Ayres and back were the exception and regarded as adventurous travellers, and even a trip to the adjoining province of Corrientes in the Argentine Republic was regarded as an undertaking of no small importance. While thus almost wholly ignorant of life and conditions abroad, many of them thought, nevertheless, that Paraguay played a great part in the affairs of nations. This always seemed to me a charming *naïveté*, but one had to be careful to accept these pretensions with becoming gravity; in such matters they were not a little susceptible.

The majority of well-to-do families in Asuncion lived on the products of their cattle ranches, *estancias*, as they are called in South America, and usually spent their winter in the capital. These *estancias* were often very large, from five to even ten leagues in extent, while those in the Chaco, where cattle lands in those days were almost worthless, extended to two or three hundred square leagues. In Paraguay a man’s riches were not calculated in terms of pounds sterling or dollars, but in cattle. Don Fulano, So-and-So, they would say, is a rich man; he has forty thousand head of cows.

These people were very simple in their tastes; a good horse or two to ride on, a silver-mounted saddle, with silver bit, reins and spurs, a handsome poncho, a wide-trimmed *jipijapa* hat, a thin black alpaca coat, and white duck trousers was their unvarying dress. The women were equally simple: a cotton or print dress fashioned with considerable grace and ornamented with the native spider-web lace, and, even among the upper classes, as

often as not, in those days, they went barefooted. Though most of the upper classes could speak Spanish more or less well, Guarani was in reality the national language, and they always spoke it when among themselves, making it difficult for a stranger to become really intimate with them. The Guarani language is exceedingly difficult, both as to grammar and pronunciation, and to my shame, I must confess, I never succeeded in acquiring more than a few words of it.

The favourite sport of the Paraguayans was horse-racing, and on Sundays and feast-days races were run in every town and country village, often for large stakes. Their race-courses are, however, entirely different from ours, and only two horses run at a time. The *cancha*, as it is called, is a straight line of from one thousand to fifteen hundred metres, marked off on the prairie. It has a starting post and a finishing post, but no rails to enclose it, though sometimes, for big events, a wired line of posts separated the two opposing horses and their riders. The course itself consists of two narrow tracks from which the grass is carefully removed, until the ground is perfectly smooth and level. Each horse has thus a narrow galloping track to itself, and cannot be interfered with by the other animal during the race. The horses are trained by their jockeys in a very careful and systematic manner, and usually become extremely quiet and docile. They are, too, extraordinarily quick off the mark.

If these details are rather dull and uninteresting, except perhaps to the elect, the day of the race is a very picturesque affair. From miles around the neighbours assemble on the course: rich *estancieros* on fine sleek *pingos*—as they call a horse whose appearance is above the ordinary—with no little portion of their wealth bestowed on trappings, bridles, and spurs. Then there are the Gauchos of the *estancias*, and, it must be added, a good many persons whose reputation as regards the observance of the fifth Commandment was, strictly speaking, more than doubtful. They are all mounted and sit easily in the saddle, discussing the chances of the *parejeros*, the South American idiom for a galloping horse.

Spaniards and their descendants in Latin America are a dignified and slow-moving people, but there is nothing that I know of which is quite so protracted as the start of a Paraguayan race. The first step is for the jockeys to divest themselves of their upper garments and appear stripped but for a jacket and a pair of long linen drawers tied at the ankles. They wear no hat, but tie up their heads with a coloured handkerchief, after the fashion of the Spanish peasants. The horses which are to compete are standing nearby covered with a fine white linen sheet, so light

in texture that it will not cause them to sweat, for even in the early morning the sun is hot, though its rays are tempered by a cool but gentle breeze, which blows over the pampas, bending the tall red grass and rustling the leaves in the palm-trees. The horses have undergone a methodical and careful training on the *cancha*, beginning with short, sharp spurts to get them quick on their legs, until finally they have gone the whole distance of a thousand metres under the watchful eye of their owners, and timed with meticulous care by sand-glasses, which the Paraguayans in those days declared to be more reliable than any stop-watches. They have been fed on the best alfalfa, carefully sifted to remove dust and impurities, sound and well dried maize, and the leaves of the pindo-palm, plucked laboriously by hand and the hard fibre in the centre of the leaf carefully removed. They are in the finest condition, as may be seen when their sheets are removed and the *guianos*, or jockeys, vault on their backs. No saddle is used; the horses are stripped but for the bridle, and ridden on a South American curb, somewhat lighter and more flexible than that used for everyday work. In his hand, suspended from his wrist, the jockey carries a light whip with a broad leather thong, the purpose of which is more to encourage than to punish the horse.

The start in a Paraguayan race is indeed an extraordinarily dilatory affair. It may begin early in the morning and a succession of false starts continue till noon, when the owners go home with their charges for a rest and refreshment. Then they will meet in the afternoon to begin all over again. The reason for this is that it is no race until both jockeys are agreed that neither has the advantage, so that they canter down to the start innumerable times, until they make up their minds to go. This, of course, upsets a hot-tempered animal, and sometimes gives his placid rival the advantage. But the horses show great intelligence, keeping a wary eye on each other, and they generally know, from some sign from their riders, when business is meant and they are free to start galloping in earnest.

These races are run in remarkably quick time, and very often a small pony of no known breeding will run away from a thoroughbred over distances up to a thousand yards.

The stakes are often very large, for the Paraguayans are great gamblers, and think nothing of backing the horse for amounts equal to several hundred pounds of our money. If they lose it merely means selling off so many cows from their *estancias*.

Though there is no starter in a Paraguayan race, the judge is a person vested with considerable authority, and has to enjoy the confidence of the owners of the competing horses. More impor-

tant still is the stakeholder, who, for obvious reasons, is generally a person of local importance, selected from the neighbouring *estancieros*.

Some time later, after I had returned from leave in England, some friends and myself got up a racing club at a place called San Bernardino, which was prettily situated on the shores of a lake, and was a favourite winter spot for the people from Buenos Ayres. San Bernardino was a very pleasant little town, and I then took up my residence there, coming into Asuncion early every morning for my work, and returning in the evening.

CHAPTER XVI

PARAGUAYAN DANCES AND A TRAGEDY

IT is said that the Jesuits gained their influence over the Guarani Indians by teaching them music and dancing, and though this may perhaps be a libel spread by the enemies of the Company of Jesus, it is suggestive that, in my days, the oldest and favourite dance of the Paraguayans was one known as the *Santa Fé*—the Holy Faith. This dance is peculiar to Paraguay, and very graceful and interesting to watch, but so complicated that foreigners rarely attempt it. The Paraguayan *gente del Pueblo*, or lower classes, as we should say, are exceedingly graceful dancers and devoid of all vulgarity. I found the native *bailes*, as the country dances are called, much more interesting than the balls given in Asuncion itself, where European dress and the usual inanities of the ball-room were observed. The *bailes*, on the other hand, were often quite exciting affairs, and I was once present at one where a tragedy occurred.

It happened in this way. I was staying with a friend in an *estancia*, situated in a remote and rather lonely part of the country, and one evening he suggested that we should look in at a neighbouring ranchman, who was giving a *baile*. I agreed, and after a bath in the cool waters of a creek nearby, we dressed up in our native finery, *bombachas* (wide trousers), riding boots with silver spurs, light coat, and coloured silk handkerchief knotted round the neck. This is rather a contrast to conventional ball-room dress, but it is the correct attire for a "Camp" ball, for the opening of which we were now awaiting the signal.

Night came suddenly, as it does in these latitudes, and there was a stillness in the air, which was only broken by the sigh of the wind in the forest. As we watched, three rockets rose suddenly on the darkening night and exploded with a sharp report, which contrasted with the stillness. This is the signal which announces far and wide to the neighbours that a *fiesta* is on hand, and no other invitation is required. My friend and I mounted our horses, which were tied to the overhanging branches of a tree outside, and cantering across the grass for a few hundred yards, struck the forest path which led direct to the house where the *baile* was to take place. It was now dark but for the stars and the fireflies which flashed across the road, but the horses knew the way and cantered along briskly, so that in less than three-quarters of an hour we were at our destination.

"*Bienvenidos, Señores—apeerse*" ("Welcome, gentlemen—dismount") was the greeting of our host, so, tying up our horses, we entered the house, where we were pleasantly greeted by his wife and daughter, who were busy setting out the refreshments for the evening. These consisted of a freshly-baked tray of *chipa*, a kind of bread made with cheese, a demijohn of *vino seco*, a strong white wine, and another of *caña*, or Paraguayan rum, which is an agreeable, but very potent spirit.

Ramona, our host's daughter, was the belle of the district. Tall and slender, with regular features, and a pair of lustrous dark eyes, she was only fifteen, but her budding figure was a model for a sculptor, and she walked with that grace and poetry of motion which is common to the women of Spanish America. She was dressed in a plain white *bata*, with lace at her neck and sleeves, a simple white skirt, beneath which her perfectly formed naked feet appeared. In a coil of her thick dark hair she wore a cluster of the sweet-scented golden *ysipo*. Needless to say that such a beautiful girl had many admirers. But of these two only were favoured. José, the one she seemed most to fancy, owned a small piece of land and a house nearby. He was by profession a horse-breaker, and, when not courting Ramona, would be riding the country, stopping at any *estancia* where there were colts to break. He was a very fine horseman, one of the old class of horse-tamers, who in the Gaucho phrase, did not "respect" any animal. Nothing could move him from the saddle, and I have seen him sit a vicious bucking colt with a lazy grace and a cigarette between his lips the while, but always alert and ready for the next move of the infuriated animal beneath him. Sometimes, tired of the inutility of bucking, the colt would turn its head suddenly and attempt to seize its rider's feet between its teeth, or, rearing up straight on end, it would totter and fall back, hoping thus to crush its rider. But José was always too quick, and already on his feet before the animal fell, and as it rose on its legs would vault cat-like into the saddle once more, until, tired of its ineffective struggles, the colt gave in and submitted to the mastery of man. It looked so easy and yet was so hard to imitate for anyone who was not born to the business, and you only realized the severity of the struggle when the *domador* dismounted, for then, if the colt had been a real handful, you would see the blood dropping from the rider's nose and slowly oozing from his ears. A *domador's* life, more especially if he carries on his profession after youth is past, is not usually a long one; but they are a class of men whom one cannot but admire for their extraordinary skill and daring. Such a man, then, was José, the favoured lover of our host's beautiful daughter.



A PARAGUAYAN RANCHO

Blas, his rival, who refused to relinquish the hope of still winning Ramona, though her preference for the other was manifest to all, was by trade a hunter, and made a good business by selling the skins of the animals which he shot. He was noted for his skill in the chase as well as for his courage, and it was said of him that a year or more ago, face to face with an angry wounded jaguar and unable to reload his primitive weapon, he had, after a terrific struggle, in which he received more than one wound himself, succeeded in dispatching the infuriated beast with his knife. This feat made him famous in the neighbourhood.

Guests now commenced to arrive on horseback, their women riding pillion behind them and laughing and chattering as they dismounted. The two rivals had also made their appearance, riding fine, spirited nags, their saddles and bridles heavily ornamented with silver. The horses were all tied up under the trees around the house, and the noise made by the constant champing of their heavy iron bits formed a fitting accompaniment to this Gaucho festival.

The musicians, consisting of two guitarists, a violin, and a harp, now commenced to tune their instruments, and presently the ball opened with the customary quadrille, which was danced with considerable ceremony, and after which everybody was tuned up for the business of the evening. Ramona had not yet danced, but had busied herself in handing the *copitas* of wine and cakes to the older guests. These duties accomplished, she was claimed for the dance then commencing by José. Blas had also risen for the purpose of inviting her, but was forestalled by his rival, who was nearer to her. He sat down sullenly, watching her closely. The festivities were now in full swing, and the scene in the room, dimly lighted by candles, was an animated one to which the picturesque dresses of the men lent colour, while the clinking of their big Gaucho spurs formed an accompaniment to the throbbing of the guitars. Many of the women had attached fireflies to their hair, and in the darker corners of the room the light of these insects shone with a lustre which resembled, but surpassed, the fire of opals.

Towards midnight the partners formed up for the *Santa Fé*, which is always the feature of the evening. It is a dance composed of intricate figures, in which the women alternately encourage and then retreat before the ardour of their partners. Grace and boldness characterize the men's part in the dance, and they make much play with spurs and the silver-headed *rebenque*, which sways from a loop attached to their wrist. The folded *poncho*, which hangs from the shoulder, also adds to the movement in the picture. Usually the men and women improvise verses in Spanish

or in Guarani during the dances, and it is this which makes it so difficult for a foreigner to achieve distinction in the *Santa Fé*. Few indeed attempt it. Can one imagine a stranger attempting such complicated figures, and at the same time improvising verses in a foreign language! Nevertheless, I have known a few Englishmen, who, coming out to the country as young boys, learnt to do both extremely well. There was a great sound of applause from the lookers-on after the conclusion of the *Santa Fé*, when dancing ceased for a moment, while the guests turned their attention to the refreshments, which were handed round by our hostess and her daughter. The snowy piles of *chipa* were greedily demolished, and deep inroads were made into the demi-johns of *caña* and *vino seco*.

When we had eaten and drunk to our fill the two guitarists asked permission to sing some *coplas*, or verses. These singers are known through South America as *payadores*, and correspond very closely to the troubadours of the Middle Ages, for they travel from place to place and sing ballads telling the life and doings of famous Gauchos and other popular heroes. There is one song which they sing which is entirely concerned with the doings of a certain Pedro Luna, a famous bandit who flourished in the Argentina about fifty years ago, and who was one of the most infamous cut-throats who ever disgraced any country. His feats of horsemanship and the fact that he was often generous to the poor endeared him to the people and caused his memory to be kept alive in verse and song long after he had paid the penalty for his many crimes. The word *payador* has a curious origin, being derived from the Guarani word *payé*, signifying a witch-doctor. The connexion between an Indian witch-doctor and a player and singer to the guitar seems somewhat remote, but it is nevertheless, I believe, quite authentic and arises from the fact that the *payé* used to blow into a hollow gourd, which produced sounds which the Indians believed was the voice of the gods. *Payé* also means witchcraft, and is a word in common use among the Paraguayans.

On this occasion, as we soon learnt, the singers were not concerned with the past, but with the present, for they were to act, each in their turn, as trumpeters to the fame of the two rivals to the hand of our host's daughter.

The first performer was a middle-aged man with a dark, handsome face and long hair turning grey, which reached almost to his shoulders. Having tuned his guitar, the *payador* now proceeded to chant with a high nasal tenor voice the qualities and achievements of his patron, José Campos. The voice of the singer was not wholly sympathetic to European ears, but, like



TRAGEDY AT A PARAGUAYAN "BAILE." "RAMONA WAS SUPPORTING
HIS HEAD IN HER ARMS" [See page 133]

all Spaniards and their descendants, he had a wonderful sense of time and rhythm. The music had that melancholy and stirring note of wildness which is reminiscent of the days of the Moorish dominion in Spain. The words of the ballad were impromptu, and, though rudely composed, were not without a trace of the poetic imagery which is common even to the uneducated of these lands. One verse—a vivid description of horsemanship—alone remains in my memory. “*Mozo ginetazo, ahijuna, capaz de llevar un potro a sofrenarlo en la luna.*” This is a Gaucho idiom and well-nigh untranslatable, but roughly it means that the subject of the ballad was a horseman so wondrous that he could lift a colt right into the moon and there bend him to the rein! There was great applause when our *payador* finished, and as soon as it had subsided the second minstrel asked permission to divert the public. This was an old man, nearer seventy than sixty, and a very skilful player of the guitar, but his impromptu verses, which he chanted rather than sang, in praise of the rival, Blas, were in Guarani, so I, for my part, did not understand much of their purport. His effort was, however, evidently appreciated, as was shown by the applause which greeted him. Now the music struck up a valse, but the first streaks of dawn were already showing in the east and there was a lack of animation amongst the guests, very different from that which had prevailed earlier in the evening. Both José and Blas rose and went towards Ramona to claim her for the dance. As the two men met before her there was a scuffle, the flash of a knife, and José, after swaying for a moment, sank to the ground. His face was deadly pale and blood was flowing from a deep wound in the lower part of his side. Ramona was supporting his head in her arms, and was endeavouring to staunch the flow of blood. The others were gathered in a circle watching the wounded man. The pale light of dawn had now crept into the room and, mingling with the light of the candles, showed up every detail of the scene with a ghastly clarity. We heard the thud of a horse’s gallop on the grass. It was Blas fleeing from justice.

As we watched it became clearer that José was a dying man. Several times he tried to speak to Ramona, but the words would not come, and there was an ominous rattle in his throat. At last he struggled to a sitting position, turned to look into the eyes of the woman who was holding him, and after a moment fell back dead into her arms.

The room was speedily emptied of the guests, who mounted their horses and set off for home. They could do no good, and were frightened that, if they remained till the authorities arrived, they would be summoned as witnesses, or otherwise involved.

My friend and I awaited the arrival of the local judge, and having given him a full account of the occurrence we too mounted our horses and rode off. It was good to be again in God's fresh air and to feel the cool breeze of the morning on our cheeks as we cantered homewards.

On arrival, a bath in the stream and then breakfast braced us up after the events of the night. But it was a good many days before we recovered our spirits after the tragedy we had witnessed.

Blas got clear away and was not seen again in that part of the country, and a year or two after the beautiful Ramona married a *tropero* a good many years older than herself, had several children, and was reported to be extremely happy. But I am sure she never forgot the tragic end of that *baile*.

CHAPTER XVII

THE COLONIES OF NEW AUSTRALIA AND COSME

WHEN I took up my post as Consul in Asuncion I was told that I might expect a good deal of trouble from the Australians, who had formed two colonies in the province of Caazapa. My predecessor, it was said, had been worried into premature grey hairs owing to their persistent demands for relief and repatriation, and finding him obdurate the Australians had even left their babies on his doorstep, which, as he was a bachelor, he must have found not a little inconvenient. As a matter of fact, as it turned out, my relations with the Australians were extremely pleasant ones, and I even got a flattering notice in the "Sydney Bulletin," which called me a model British official.

The history of the Australian emigration movement in Paraguay is shortly as follows: During the 'nineties, at the time of the severe drought and bank failures in Australia, a party of men and women, who had espoused the cause of communism, determined to leave Australia and carry out their ideals on the free soil of South America. Their leaders were the two brothers Lane, and these, together with some other members of the party, had for long been the cause of no little trouble to the Government of Australia. Not a few of them had undergone terms of imprisonment for riot and other breaches of the peace, and altogether they comprised a band of pretty desperate men. One of the leaders, whom I knew well but whose name I have stupidly forgotten, was married to a sister of Nietzsche. Should he read these lines, let him be assured that, if my memory has been treacherous as to his name, I have by no means forgotten his hospitality and many acts of kindness when I visited New Australia.

After much discussion as to the most suitable spot for this experiment in communism Paraguay was chosen, and the Government of that country donated the Australian settlers with a considerable extent of forest land in the neighbourhood of Caazapa. The settlers, some three hundred in number, certain that for them the millennium had dawned, then chartered a sailing vessel, and with wives and children and their household goods and chattels set sail for the land of freedom. They left the country of their birth apparently without regret, renounced their nationality, and devised a new flag, which was flown at the fore of the "Jolly Tar," as their ship was named. The flag was, I believe, a black one and of a distinctly piratical appear-

ance. But from the outset luck did not favour the enterprise. The "Jolly Tar" met with adverse winds, and rolled and pitched herself out of her course, so that when she reached the Plate there were already many discontents among the once happy family of communists. They proceeded, however, to Asuncion and on arrival there the discontent increased. They didn't like the look of the country—so much as they had seen of it; there was some mild sickness amongst them, and already some members of the party were tired of the experiment and asked to be sent back to Australia. But the main body of the settlers set forth on their march to the promised land which had been allotted to them, and after enduring some hardships, mainly due to their ignorance of conditions in a new country, arrived at their destination. All hands now busied themselves in putting up hutments for their accommodation and in clearing part of the forest for planting maize and other cereals for food. It was no doubt very hard work, for they were totally unused to tropical forest-land, and the food, accustomed as they were to unlimited Australian mutton, seemed most inadequate. Many were attacked by a mild form of malaria, which is always a depressing disease, and nearly all of them suffered from sores on their hands and bodies, caused by the neglected bites of the various blood-sucking insects which abound in these latitudes, and to which they were wholly unused. One in particular, the *pique*, known in the West Indies as the "jigger," from the Indian dialect word *nigua*, caused them a great deal of suffering. The *pique*—*Pulex Penetrans*—is an insect which lays its eggs usually beneath the toe-nails, where, after some days, a mild irritation is felt. The bag of eggs should then be extracted by means of a needle or sharp-bladed knife, care being taken to get it out whole. Every native woman can perform this operation to perfection, and she usually puts a plug of tobacco in the hole made in extracting the eggs; this acts as a disinfectant. If, however, the *pique* is neglected, hundreds of young ones are speedily hatched out from the egg-sack, the wound becomes septic, and mortification and even death may ensue. This occurs more frequently in the case of a specially poisonous variety of the *pique*, which is fortunately rare. The Australians, who had never heard of this insect, neglected the sores which it caused, with the result that there were several serious cases of blood-poisoning among them, some of which proved fatal. This, combined with malaria and other minor ills, caused great discontent among the party, who were now thoroughly disillusioned in what they had fondly believed would prove an earthly Paradise. They found, too, that their leaders, who now tasted for the first time the sweets of power, were

disposed to be not a little tyrannical, and that their dream of absolute freedom had proved illusory. Many said that the Lanes were harder taskmasters than any they had known in Australia. So strong was the spirit of discontent among the communists who, a few weeks before, had been so firm in their convictions, that a party of them decided to separate from the main body and to establish themselves on a basis of independent and individual labour in a different part of the country, on land bestowed on them by the Paraguayan Government.

This settlement they called "New Australia."

The remainder of the party, still faithful to the communist creed and under the leadership of the Lanes, settled themselves on other land a considerable distance away, which they called the "Cosme Colony."

Such was then the situation as regards the Australian emigrants when I arrived in the country. The camp, as has been seen, was divided, and the expedition had already proved—to some extent, at any rate—a failure.

After I had been living in Asuncion for some time I was on various occasions able to do the colonists some small services, in recognition of which they sent me a present of an Australian stock-whip which had been made in New Australia. I asked the bearer of the present to stay with me for a few days, and he taught me the use of it. The Australians are, of course, skilled almost from babyhood in the use of the stock-whip, but it is an accomplishment which is by no means easy and needs knack and a supple wrist. After a while I became fairly expert and could do the "cow and calf cut" and the "Sydney flash" fairly well for an amateur. With its short handle and twenty-foot lash, the stock-whip is far easier to use on horseback than on foot, though the beginner must be careful not to cut off his own ear, or entangle the lash between the legs of his horse and get bucked off for his pains. It is all done with the wrist, something like fly-fishing, and, like many other things, looks easy but isn't.

The ice being thus broken and our relations having become friendly, I soon took advantage of an invitation to visit the colony and enjoy a few weeks' shooting there. So one fine morning I saddled up Tally-ho, a bay Argentine pony which I had imported from Hurlingham, Buenos Ayres, and mounting my native servant on an old dun horse which I had also acquired recently, we set forth on our journey, carrying nothing but a toothbrush and a change of clothes. My shotgun and rifle and a number of cartridges I had already sent by wagon to the colony some days before. I also carried my revolver as a matter of

course, for, as they say in the country, "*Cinco balas son cinco amigos*" ("Five bullets are five friends").

Tally-ho was a good working nag, standing about 14.2 hands, and a very comfortable ride. He had played polo at the Hurlingham Club, had won a small race or two, and was a very fair jumper. Khaki, as I called the old horse, was a big, raking dun, about 16.2 hands high, who had won a number of races on the flat in the Argentine, when he had been owned by General Roca, a politician and a great personage of that Republic. I had exchanged him for a colt which I had in my stable, and at first it seemed as if the deal was a bad bargain for me, for Khaki was nine or ten years old and dead lame in front. I saw, however, that the lameness was caused by bad corns, and fancied that I could get him right. This, in fact, proved to be the case, for, on taking off his shoes, he soon became sound and proved a very gallant mount, mettlesome and somewhat excitable by reason of his previous racing career. A friend of mine, who had known the horse in his young days, told me that he had won upwards of five thousand pounds in stakes in the Argentine. When I left Paraguay I gave him to an English doctor, who had a practice in an out-of-the-way part of the country, and who, in order to impress his humble patients, told them that Khaki was a present through me from King Edward, who, mindful of his distinguished subjects abroad, had chosen this means of recognizing their doctor's labours.

The journey to New Australia occupied about six days and was uneventful. I did not press the horses and fed them well, so that they arrived fresh and in good condition at their destination, where I found that the colonists had reserved a comfortable two-roomed hut for my use. Here we settled down, my servant doing the cooking while I provided the food with my gun. The horses were turned out in an adjoining paddock, and in addition received a feed of maize three times a day, and were also regularly bathed at midday in a creek about two miles away.

New Australia was certainly a sportsman's Paradise, for, in addition to big game, there was an abundance of bird-life of all kinds. As a commencement I devoted myself to the latter, and every day shot sufficient partridges for my own use and for a number of colonists as well.

I was considerably assisted in my shooting by the services of my dog, Jim, who was a good and steady pointer. Two varieties of partridges were present in great numbers, the ordinary *tinamou* and the *martineta*; the woodland partridge was also met with, though more rarely. The *tinamou* is a small brown bird, very like our English partridge, though I believe it belongs

more strictly speaking to the quail family. It does not, however, fly in coveys, but in pairs, and is strong on the wing, affording good sporting shots. In taste it is very like our English partridge. The *martineta* is the largest of the *tinamou* family, being twice the size of a blackcock. It is beautifully coloured with a rich brown plumage, and under the wings is of a reddish shade. It gets up with a whirr that, until you are used to it, very often puts you off your shot. My dog, Jim, when pointing one, showed twice the excitement he did when following the smaller bird. He became absolutely stiff from head to tail, and often I had a difficulty in pushing him along fast enough to prevent the bird running away altogether, for they are great runners and will not go up unless the dog is right on top of them. The *martineta* is most delicious eating; indeed, in my opinion, it is one of the very best game birds that exists for the table. The third bird, the woodland partridge, or *perdiz del monte*, is a beautiful and graceful little bird which is found on the edges of the forest. Grey and brown in colour, it has a head exactly like that of a wild pigeon and a pink eye. Besides these varieties I generally shot a few couples of snipe, and these were greatly esteemed by the colonists, though personally I don't care about them for eating, as I always find they have a fishy flavour.

Having thoroughly enjoyed this sport for a number of days, and filled the larders of my hosts, I was anxious to try my hand at bigger game, and finally arranged to make a day of it after jaguar with a professional hunter, a Brazilian who had two so-called "tiger-dogs." These dogs do not belong to any particular breed, and indeed are generally miserable-looking curs, whose only claim to distinction is that they will follow the spoor of the tiger, which most dogs will not do. We started off one morning at 3 a.m. on horseback, as we intended to ride to the Laguna Negra, in the vicinity of which several jaguars had recently been reported. I rode my horse Tally-ho, who was in capital fettle, and even shook a buck or two out of himself when I mounted in the chilly moments just preceding the dawn. As it became light we kept a good look out for deer at the corners of the *monte*, where they are in the habit of feeding. At one of these spots I was lucky enough to see a full-grown tapir standing in the middle of an open space and browsing placidly like a cow. I put Tally-ho into as fast a gallop as he knew how, with the intention of cutting the tapir off from the forest which lay behind, but quick as the pony went—and he had won races at Hurlingham—the tapir went faster, and out-distanced me to such an extent that I was unable even to get a shot. I hate chancing a shot and perhaps wounding an animal with no prospect of getting

him. So the *mborevi* (tapir) got clean away into the cool depths of the forest, whilst I—perhaps not very 'sorry for his escape, but exhilarated by the sharp gallop—turned Tally-ho round and trotted back to my companion, who laughed and said, "The *mborevi* is faster than your horse, and you wouldn't have got near him, even if the distance to the *monte* had been twice as far." I felt rather annoyed at this disparagement of my horse ; but perhaps he was right.

It was only a little after 4 a.m. when we reached the Brazilian's hut, where, after tying the horses under a shady tree and partaking of a cup of *maté*, we set off on our hunt accompanied by two mangy-looking curs, which, I was assured, were first-rate tiger-dogs. There was no doubt that we were in a part of the country sufficiently removed from human habitation where the South American tiger was present in considerable numbers, for we repeatedly saw his tracks in the mud near the pools of the rivulet which we crossed. We put the dogs on some of these tracks, which appeared to be comparatively fresh, and after nosing about for a bit they started off into the forest. We followed them as quickly and quietly as possible, but the white man is always at a disadvantage compared to the native, who can run through the forest silently without stirring a bush or giving the alarm to game. For myself I never succeeded in acquiring this art, and at the critical moment would find myself treading on a piece of wood, which snapped with a noise which seemed to my tense nerves like a loud explosion, and made me feel very clumsy and awkward. But we never came up with the dogs, and after searching for them for some time the Brazilian decided that they had run home. So here was the end of my visions of bagging a jaguar, for there is very little chance of coming across one without dogs, and even should one do so it is unlikely that one will get a shot. But there was a chance of coming across some other game in this great forest, which extends right into Brazil, and after a parley my companion and I decided to go on and to make for some salt licks of which the Brazilian knew, and where we were not unlikely to come across deer or even a tapir. It was hard work getting through the jungle even at a walk, and before long the sweat was dripping from my forehead and almost blinding me. The salt licks too proved a blank, and after waiting there for about a quarter of an hour we struck farther into the forest, which became denser and more gloomy at every step. Suddenly I heard a strange sound. It resembled vaguely the noise made by a person clapping his hands, and was often repeated. I turned to the Brazilian, who whispered in my ear, "*Chanchos*," meaning wild pigs or peccary.

As a boy I had read stories in books of adventure of hunters being treed by these savage beasts, but I was far too excited to give heed, and, forgetting all my weariness, I dashed forward at my best pace in the direction of the sound, which grew louder as I approached, and I now realized that it was made by the snapping of the jaws of the *chanchos*. Abandoning all precautions I made my way as quickly as the thickness of the jungle would permit, and in a few moments a strange sight met my eyes. In a large clearing in the forest a herd of some one hundred and fifty to two hundred of the peccary were gathered, and my attention was most attracted to a huge boar which was nosing the soil beneath an old fallen tree. The distance was about a hundred feet from where I stood, and taking careful aim I fired. My bullet struck him in the middle of the shoulder, and he fell dead in his tracks. I had barely a second or two in which to enjoy the rapture of the successful hunter when it seemed as if pandemonium had been let loose. A peccary made straight for me, and to avoid him I ran farther into the opening in the forest, when, as if by magic, the beasts encircled me, and a large boar, running between my legs, upset my balance and caused me to fall to the ground. I got up and aimed to fire, but at this moment my rifle stuck, and I was again knocked down, and owing to the repeated charges of the peccary was unable to get up. So there I lay on my back, kicking at them with my feet, and trying thus to keep them away from my body and face. Fortunately I had on a pair of stout riding boots, which protected my legs and feet from their razor-like tusks. My sensations as I lay on the ground were not unpleasant; the thing had come too suddenly for me to have any fear, and my mind was simply bewildered. I did not even wonder if I was going to be killed or not, and the only idea I had was to keep the beasts off me and try and get my rifle to work again. As a matter of fact, though I was probably nearer death than I have ever been before or since, I was aroused from this dream-like state by the sudden appearance of the Brazilian, who fired a shot—killing a pig as I afterwards learnt—and then came to my side, laying about him with his *machete*, a short sword, with which he disabled two others. He then seized me by the arm and pulled me to my feet, when, to my joy, I found my rifle again in working order and commenced firing as fast as I could, each time bringing down one of my enemies. They were, however, apparently still full of fight, and a boar—I think it was the one which first charged and upset me—again ran at me. I dropped him with a bullet at close quarters, and in a moment the whole troop turned heel and disappeared as if by magic. The Brazilian at once turned

to me and, wiping the sweat from his brow with his hand, said leisurely :

" Señor, if ever a man deserved to be killed you are that man."

" Why ? " I asked.

" Imagine the folly of attacking a large *bandada* of *javalí* in the forest, where they will easily kill a tiger under such circumstances. Why didn't you, at any rate, climb a tree ? "

I assured my companion that I had had no time to think of climbing trees, and that, of whatever degree of folly I might have been guilty, he, knowing the danger, was a brave man, and that I undoubtedly owed him my life. After which we looked at our bag, which consisted of seven slain, including the old boar at which I had fired my first shot causing all the trouble. The hunter went up to each of them in turn and cut out the gall-bag, which is placed in their backs just over the haunches. This, he told me, was necessary, for otherwise the meat is spoilt. He then cut off as many choice morsels as he could carry and, at my request, the head of the old boar, and signified that he was ready to start back home. While the Brazilian had been thus occupied I had examined my own condition, and found that, with the exception of a few bruises and scratches, I was quite sound. My clothes, however, literally hung in shreds on me, and my stout riding boots, which had aided in saving my life, were much torn and battered.

It was now midday, and we had marched for about an hour when I asked my companion if it was possible to find any water, as I was parched with thirst. "*Talvez*" (" Perhaps "), he answered laconically, and marched on, his eyes fixed on the trees overhead. After walking for another mile or two I said to him with considerable irritation, for I was nearly done, " You won't find water by looking in the air," to which he replied again "*Talvez*."

A moment after he stopped beside a big tree, round which was entwined a network of parasite growth, and, selecting a stout *liana*, about as thick as a man's arm, he chopped off a piece roughly two feet in length and handed it to me. Large, clear drops of water were oozing from the stem, and I held it up and let the precious liquid drop into my mouth. It was cool and delicious, and in a few minutes my thirst was assuaged and a new vitality infused into my being. "*Vamos*," I said to my companion, who had again rendered me a great service, and also initiated me into one of nature's secrets, and, stepping out bravely, we did not call a halt until we reached the hut where we had tethered our horses. Our first duty was to attend to these, water them, and give them a good feed of the leaves of



" I LAY ON MY BACK KICKING AT THEM WITH MY FEET " [See page 141]

the pindo-palm. This is a first-rate and nourishing food, and is even given to race-horses in training. Its preparation is, however, somewhat laborious, and one has to pull out with finger and thumb the hard, stringy fibre which lies in the middle of the leaf. This business done, my companion set about lighting a fire and preparing a stew of the pig's meat which he had carried with him. In about an hour the dish was ready and we did full justice to it, the meat being white and sweet and tasting very like our domestic pig. Over the meal my Brazilian friend told me some more about the habits of the *javalí*, or peccary, as we call them in English, though this latter name is not used in South America; *javalí* is the native Indian word, and is common to all South American countries. He again insisted on the savage and dangerous nature of these animals, of which there are two varieties, a larger and a smaller, both being in appearance similar and having a white mark round their necks. It was the larger kind which we had encountered, but both, he assured me, were equally savage when met with in the forest, though, oddly, if found in the open plain they will not dream of attacking man, though they could do so with even greater impunity. Their home is in the thick of the dark, impenetrable jungle, where, as has been seen, they are a dangerous foe to tackle. But, said the hunter, if you only stand on even a tree stump, a foot or so above their heads, they will not think of harming anyone, and, he added, the reason why they had disappeared with such mysterious rapidity was that either he or I had, by a lucky chance, shot their *cacique*, or chief, who, though not necessarily in a position of prominence or of unusual size, is nevertheless their recognized leader, and without him they are as a regiment without its officer. I asked how they elected a new *cacique*, and he replied that probably one of the herd who was *ambicioso* elected himself. How this may be I cannot tell, for though I subsequently encountered these pigs singly or running in fours, I never again met with one of the great herds in the forests of South America. But to this day, as a remembrance of my adventure, I have a small, very sharply pointed tooth made into a pin for a hunting scarf, and this is from the head of the formidable old boar which I shot while he was rooting under that fallen tree.

After our meal we saddled up and rode slowly back home.

CHAPTER XVIII

MY GERMAN FRIEND

MY stay of three weeks at the New Australian Colony had now come to an end, and it was necessary to break up camp and return to my work at Asuncion. I had, however, one final day's shoot in order to supply the larders of my friends with game, and after taking leave of them all and receiving a hearty invitation to return when I could, I made an early start and by sunrise had left the colony some miles behind. On the return journey I had the misfortune to lose my pointer under the following circumstances: When nearing the town of Villa Rica and riding along slowly at about 9 p.m. the dog, who was running close at hand, suddenly stood at the point, apparently indicating that a partridge was lying close by in the high, red grass. I called out to him to stand, and, my shotgun being handy, got off my horse, slipped a couple of cartridges in the barrels, and walked up to the dog. As I came up to him I encouraged him to go on. The animal advanced cautiously and suddenly gave a yelp, at the same time springing to one side. I did not pay much attention to him as I was expecting the bird to get up. As this did not occur, however, after walking about a few minutes in search of it, I went back to my horse and, remounting, rode on. Glancing at the dog, I noticed that he appeared sick and sorry and was travelling badly. Getting down from my horse I looked him over, and soon saw the cause of the trouble, for on his shoulder were clearly visible the marks of a snake's fangs, two fairly deep punctures about an inch or so apart. I at once called to my servant to stop and take my horse, and going to my wallets I got some permanganate of potash and a bottle of rum. Then pulling a hair from my horse's tail and holding it taut in my two hands, I passed it over the wounds to see if the snake had broken off his fangs in striking. This proved not to have been the case, and I enlarged the wound with my pen-knife, letting it bleed freely. We then carried the dog to a shady place, where, after tying up the horses, I filled the wound with permanganate and then gave him a stiff dram of rum. Unfortunately, I had with me no hypodermic syringe, but this accident taught me a lesson, and I was never again without one when on my travels. For it might just as well have been the boy or I who had been bitten, and from the appearance of the punctures and the height at which he struck

it must have been a large snake, probably a rattler, though I had not heard the warning sound which these reptiles give. We remained at the place all day, and I alternately washed the dog's wounds with permanganate and dosed him with rum. Towards sunset he seemed better for a moment, for he got up from his blanket and came towards me wagging his tail feebly. It was as if he wished to thank me for what I had tried to do for him, for immediately afterwards he lay down and, becoming comatose, passed away shortly after. Having no means of digging a grave, we covered his body with heavy stones and so left him. Then, mounting, we rode on, glad to get away from the spot where I had thus lost a faithful and sporting friend. The natives say that dogs are attracted by the smell of snakes and follow them up as they do a bird, not realizing the danger they are running. I do not know whether this is really so, but in this case it looked very much as if what they say is true. I must, myself, have run a considerable risk, for I had only low shoes on at the time, and a bite from a rattlesnake, or whatever variety of serpent it was, would certainly have proved fatal, unprovided as I was with a hypodermic syringe. The bite of a rattlesnake is usually fatal in an hour or so, especially if he gets you with both fangs, unless the correct remedies are promptly administered. The rattlesnake is common in Paraguay, but does not usually attain the great size it sometimes does in other South American countries. Its Latin name, *Crotalus terrificus*, well expresses the dread one feels at the sight or sound of this loathsome reptile. Other poisonous snakes are the *kyririó*, *yacanino*, *mboi shumbò*, and the *nandurié*, all of which are often deadly, especially the last, whose bite is said to be fatal after two or three minutes. The word "mboi" means snake in Guarani, and from it is derived our own word "boa," as in boa-constrictor, or the fur a lady wears round her neck.

The word "jaguar" is also derived from the Guarani "yagua," meaning a tiger or leopard, as is "hammock" from the Indian word "amàca." The word "cockroach" is also stated to be a derivation from the native word "cucaracha," by which this insect is known throughout South and Central America. The suggestion is that when our merchant ships first began trading in the Spanish Main our sailors, seeing the noisome insect for the first time and inquiring its name, were told "cucaracha." By the time the ship had finished her voyage and returned to a British port "cucaracha" had been Angliziced by the sailors to "cockroach." So much for the Guarani words in the English language.

Although from the beginning my relations with Cosme—the communist Australian Colony from which New Australia had separated—had been friendly ones, it was only at a later date that I received an official invitation from John Lane to pay them a visit. I of course accepted, and as G., my German colleague, was extremely anxious to gain knowledge at first hand of this early experiment in the Marxian theories, I asked permission to bring him as well. My request was kindly granted. G. and I had been on friendly terms for some time past, and we had already made some shooting expeditions together. Though a typical Prussian bureaucrat and completely ignorant of all countries other than his own, he was, on the whole, a very good fellow, though self-assertive and positive that he must necessarily know everything better than everybody else. These inward convictions got him into some amusing scrapes when travelling, as will be shown hereafter.

Our arrangements were soon made, and early one morning I rode up to my friend's house, accompanied by my servant. It was midsummer in Paraguay, and I was anxious to make an early start, but few Europeans are early risers, and G. kept me waiting for some time. When at last he did appear, smiling and rubicund, for he was a very stout person, in appearance not a little like our "Bluff King Hal," I was literally dumbfounded at his attire, for he wore a thick green Norfolk suit, knickerbockers, woollen stockings, and stout lace boots. His whole get-up would have been eminently suited for winter sport in Switzerland, but it was midsummer, and at that period the heat in Paraguay is no joke. Presently I saw that for headgear he proposed wearing a tropical helmet which was lying on a chair nearby. I asked him tentatively if he did not think he would find his dress rather warm, to which he replied lightly: "Oh, no," and pointing to his legs with pride, he said, "*Das sind die sogenannten deutschen Jagdstrümpfe*" ("These are the so-called German hunting stockings"), as if I had never seen such articles of apparel before. I judged it wisest to say no more, but to get away as quickly as possible before the sun got much higher in the heavens; and after girthing up his pony as tightly as I could, for it had a great weight to bear on the stirrup, we sallied forth, G. in great spirits and trolling snatches of German student-songs as we jogged along.

Presently my native servant announced that he thought it would rain shortly, a statement which, as the bright blue sky was absolutely without a cloud, seemed to me particularly senseless. I pointed this out to him, whereupon he replied, "It always rains when the *gringos* sing," a reflection on the

musical talents of the foreigners which, as I told him, was not in the best of taste.

Our progress was slow, and at midday we halted as the heat was overpowering and my German friend was well-nigh done. He was, however, quite cheerful, and proceeded to unsaddle his own horse, but, as he first removed the bridle, the animal naturally made off for the nearest grass, and my servant and I had some difficulty in catching him. I pointed out that it was best to remove the saddle first, but he said, "Oh, no! That is the way we do it in the German army," to which I could make no reply. He had served in the artillery and was proud of it, but I concluded that he had always had someone to saddle and bridle his horses, and had himself forgotten the little he had ever known about horses.

We had intended to sleep in a small village where rough accommodation for man and beast was to be had, but we did not arrive there till nearly eleven o'clock at night; and though I tried my best to awaken the owners of the *boliche*, or inn, they turned a deaf ear to my oft-repeated "*Ave Maria*," which is the recognized salutation after sunset in South America. If the reply, "*Sin pecado concebida*" is heard, all is well for the traveller—doors will be open and food will be forthcoming. But in this case the only sound heard besides my voice was the hoot of an owl in the adjacent church, and I soon determined that we must make the best of a bad job. So we tied up the horses to the rails and lay down on the cobblestones to sleep, covering ourselves with blankets and cloaks, for the night was chilly after the great heat of the day. Just before sleep came G. murmured placidly, "*Wenn meine Mutter mich jetzt sehen könnte, würde sie blutige Tränen weinen*" ("If my mother could see me now, she would weep tears of blood"). To him the idea of the representative of *deutschum* sleeping in a street was dreadful. Yet I am sure that he slept well enough after his unwonted exercise, and at daybreak, when the owners of the *boliche* awoke and prepared *maté* for us and food for our animals, he was again a blithe spirit and proud of the hardship which he, a high-born German official, had faced and successfully overcome.

We made an early start this time, and in the evening reached a small *estancia*, of which the owner was a German married to a Dane. They gave us a hearty welcome and a very well-cooked dinner, shortly after which we retired to comfortable beds with sheets, a luxury which was much appreciated by my friend. I slept well till about 3 a.m., when I awoke and, to my horror, I saw before me in the dim light of dawn the figure of an ancient emaciated woman with scant, dishevelled white hair, who stood

before my bed wringing her hands and gibing at me. I was much frightened, and sat up in bed asking her what she wanted, but she made no reply to my questions, and went on as before gesticulating and making dreadful faces. At this moment, to my great relief, I heard steps outside, and my host walked into the room, and after speaking to the figure in a soothing manner he took her gently by the hand and led her away. In a few moments he returned full of apologies, and explained that my visitor was his wife's mother, who was insane but quite harmless. Fortunately for me our hosts had reason to think that she had got out of her room and had traced her into mine. There was not much rest for me after this adventure, and I got up and went to look at our horses, saw them fed, and waked G. Then after a substantial breakfast we managed to make an early start.

Our road now lay through a low-lying country, and at times we had to ride through mud and water up to our girths for five or six hundred yards at a time. My servant, like most country boys, was an expert at finding his way across these *esteros*, as they are called, and would never make a mistake, though he often chose what to a foreigner appeared as the least easy way. The native selects his path in crossing these bogs partly by instinct and partly by noticing what grasses and plants grow on the banks. There is generally only one safe ford, and if you stray from this you may ride into a deep hole of unfathomable mud, where horse and even rider can be drowned. After following my servant and myself over one of these bogs my German friend decided that in the future he would act as his own guide and choose a separate line, and though I told him he was risking a ducking or worse, he merely replied that, as a Prussian artillery officer of the Reserve, he was experienced in such matters and would not, as he would show me, come to any harm. So for the rest of the day when we came to an *estero* he carefully selected his way without paying any attention to us, and though he sometimes missed the road on the other side, thus delaying our progress while we waited for him to rejoin us, nothing very serious happened to chasten his independent spirit. But nevertheless Nemesis awaited him. On the following day we were due to arrive at the Cosme Colony at about 5 p.m. We made good travelling in the early morning, rested at midday for an hour or so at a place where we picked some sweet, luscious oranges, for which we were grateful in the heat, and then proceeded on our way. About an hour and a half's ride from Cosme we found a pretty bad piece of low-lying waterlogged ground, and my boy studied the sign pretty carefully before he ventured to put his horse into the muddy water. G., however, took the

stream away down on my left, and urged his unwilling horse forward. For a time all went well, when suddenly we heard a shout and saw G.'s horse plunging madly and then disappear, rider and all. We stopped but could not go to his assistance from where we were, so we urged our horses to the opposite side, on reaching which we hastily tied them to a bunch of grass and waded into the water in search of our friend, who, too corpulent to sink, was splashing about like a gigantic turtle in a pool of thick, rich mud. His horse had scrambled out on to sound ground and was placidly feeding on the other side of the marsh. I and my servant at once went to G.'s assistance, and, putting him on his feet, led him across to safety, after which we retrieved his helmet, which had drifted down the stream. Our friend was a sorry sight, muddy and soaked to the skin, with his *sogenannte deutsche Jagdstrümpfe* dangling about his heels. He was quite cheerful, however, and tractable, so as the best means of drying him we put him on his horse and continued our journey. After travelling for about five miles we were met by two horsemen, who proved to be Australians from Cosme, who had come out to meet us and conduct us into the colony. They were stout, sunburnt fellows riding small native ponies with Australian buck-jumping saddles with huge knee-pads, very clumsy to look at, as I thought. They smiled good-humouredly at the plight of our German companion, and when I explained the cause of his bedraggled appearance they congratulated him on getting off as lightly as he had. No doubt they correctly sized him up as a new chum, but, as my friend had very little English and they, of course, no German, intercourse between them was not easy. Presently we entered the colony itself, which was situated in a clearing in the midst of a vast tropical forest. The first glimpse one had of the shingle-roofed cottages with their tidy gardens in front, neatly fenced off, caused me great surprise and, I must confess, a feeling of some emotion, for here, in the midst of this strange and remote country, was what looked like a piece of England built up by men who, if political cranks, were none the less sons of the Empire.

Presently we were shown into one of these neat cottages, which was to be our home for the period of our stay, and we were told that, as soon as we had refreshed ourselves, dinner would be served in the Communal Hall, where all the colonists would be assembled. So we bathed in a creek nearby and repaired our dress as far as possible from the contents of our saddle-bags, and then proceeded to the hall, which was merely a large shingle roof open on all sides to the winds, beneath which were long tables, where our dinner was laid out. It was an

excellent meal, consisting of soup, good roast beef, vegetables, and a pudding, and washed down with cool water from the spring, for no alcoholic drink was officially allowed in the colony, though I fancy that a certain amount of the native *caña* did find its way into the settlers' cupboards. After dinner we proceeded to the school-building, where the boys and girls were assembled and presently sang to us. Their selection was mostly from well-known English songs and glees, but in honour of my German friend, and to his great satisfaction, they sang "Die Wacht am Rhein," rendering it in a very spirited fashion which evoked our genuine applause. Owing, perhaps, to my presence no revolutionary songs were given, and the "Red Flag," I fancy, had not yet been composed in those happier days.

On the following morning we were taken over the colony and shown the working of practical, or rather impractical, communism. The lands of Cosme were mostly planted with maize and mandioca, with some alfalfa for the animals. The settlers possessed, too, some two hundred head of oxen, cows, and horses. With that strange obstinacy which not infrequently distinguishes our countrymen they had not adopted many of the wise habits of the native Paraguayans in regard to life, for they rose late and worked in the fields up to midday with a fierce sun overhead and an almost unbearable heat. No little illness among the colonists could be traced to this cause, but fortunately cases of sunstroke are very rare in this country. The working time was nominally of eight hours, and each man was expected to do his full share in the fields; but naturally there were men who worked honestly and efficiently and others who slacked and dawdled with their labour until the day was over. Some men, too, were not suited by nature for field labour, and could not, even if they would, spend a day in the blazing heat, hoeing, planting, and perhaps chopping away the undergrowth and the weeds which spring up as if by magic in the fertile soil. According to the rules of the colony all must share equally in the fruits of the work—in the maize which is garnered, the coffee which is ripening in the yard, and the sugar extracted laboriously by old-fashioned methods from the sweet cane. But, human nature being what it is, the man who has "borne the heat and labour of the day" must rebel against the thought of sharing its results with some lazy fellow who has scamped his work from sunrise to sundown, and intends to continue to go slack as long as he can find someone to do his work for him. So there were many discontents among the communists of Cosme Colony. The women did not work on the land, but were, if they wanted, fully occupied in housework and looking after their families. Here

again, of course, there were inequalities, for some fulfilled these duties admirably, while others were slovenly and untidy in their persons and their homes, as they are in the larger world outside Cosme. I am afraid that in spite of the ideals with which many of their men folk had been inspired on leaving Australia and founding a new home in the wilds of South America the women were not a little addicted to gossip and even scandal, and that the communal stock, from which they all received their simple, and, perhaps, not very ornamental garments, was far from being a popular institution. It was said that when, as sometimes happened, some lady, by surreptitious means, managed to obtain from the nearest town a new hat or dress, conditions among the female colonists became far from peaceful and happy.

The Cosme children, both boys and girls, were healthy and in many cases handsome, spirited youngsters, who probably enjoyed their new life to the full. They all attended the communal school kept by an old Australian schoolmaster, who, it was said, had been imprisoned in Australia more than once for his political opinions and actions. He was, however, a very agreeable man, much interested in zoology and the big game of South America. One of his pupils, a stalwart, handsome boy of about fourteen, named Macleod, had recently killed a jaguar under very unusual circumstances. Strolling in the woods one day, close to the colony, he saw one of these beasts up a tree. Marking the spot, he ran back home to fetch his *machete*, a sort of cutlass which the natives carry and use for almost every purpose, and hurried back. By an extraordinary chance the jaguar was still in the same spot, lying along the branch of the tree, which the boy at once proceeded to climb. When the two met a homeric combat ensued, but Macleod, though severely mauled in the arm and body, never gave in until the great beast fell to the ground mortally wounded. It was a great and almost unique achievement by this gallant Scotch lad, who, when I spoke to him, made light of the whole matter, though he will bear on his body the scars of the battle till his dying day. He was a very good-looking, sturdy boy with those blue eyes which not infrequently go with high courage.

The day before our departure the colony got up a dance in the Social Hall for our benefit. This was carried on far into the night, and my German friend and I did our duties dancing with young and old. The belles of the evening were decidedly the two daughters of John Lane, aged respectively thirteen and fourteen. They were good-looking, attractive, well-grown girls, and had evidently found the means to attire themselves in finery which did not come out of the communist chest, a fact which, I

thought, was disapproved of by some of the other ladies present. I persuaded my companion to make an early start on the following morning, and there was little sign of life as we passed the trim, orderly cottages of this strange colony, with its impracticable and unworkable creed. We made a rapid journey home, for G. was now cured of his precious desire to strike out a line for himself, and on the evening of the fourth day we were safely back in Asuncion. This proved to be my only visit to Cosme, but during the rest of my stay in the country I remained in touch with the colonists, who visited me whenever they came to town. Their numbers, however, dwindled away with every year, until finally Mr. John Lane tried the experiment of bringing out some of the poorest families from Manchester and other big industrial cities in England. One would have thought that to them the trim cottages, the good food, and the regular life, coupled with a freedom from all care for the future for themselves and their families, would have been regarded as a priceless boon and a blessing. But this was not the case, for after a few months they became discontented and most of them returned to England or drifted down to the Argentine in search of work. Before leaving they came to the Consulate for advice and assistance, and I then asked them why they were leaving the colony, with its certainty of an agreeable and not too laborious existence, for the practical certainty of going back to misery and starvation.

"We miss the shop windows," they replied, and were so resolute in their determination that I forbore to argue with them.

So this small body of idle and incompetent men and women returned to the misery and destitution of life in the great cities, where they found what they missed : the shop windows.

CHAPTER XIX

THAT TERRIBLE PADRE MAIZ

IN those days most of the streets of Asuncion were unpaved and lay deep in a dark red sand. It was so deep that driving was almost an impossibility and carriages were seldom seen. Hired carriages were not to be had, and as I lived out of the town an invitation to dinner was by no means a simple affair. Walking in that heat was almost impossible, for one arrived in a hopelessly dishevelled condition, but going home I often took off my shoes and stockings and travelled barefoot and in comfort over the deep sand. But the real solution of all the difficulties was riding, and I soon came to regard a horse as the only means of getting about. A horse was not a luxury—he was an indispensable necessity, without which even one's official functions could not be properly carried out.

One night I was awakened by a violent knocking at my gate, and getting up and going down into the garden I found it was an English doctor called Snead, who had ridden post-haste to tell me that an Englishman named Cunningham had been murdered at a village called Atyrá some fifty miles away. Having given the doctor food and drink and seen to his horse, I decided to leave at daybreak on the following morning. On the way my companion told me that the parish priest of Atyrá was the notorious Padre Fidel Maiz, one of the most faithful adherents of the tyrant Lopez, and who, if the history of those times is accurate, had been responsible for the carrying out of some of his worst atrocities. Washburn, in his "History of Paraguay," refers frequently to the misdeeds of this priest, and publishes a letter signed by him addressed to the people, in which he declares that Lopez was greater than God. Washburn was American minister in Asuncion during the war, and his book, which was published after he had resigned his post, gives a very interesting and accurate account of the events of those days. He also refers at length to the imprisonment and torture at the hands of this priest of an Englishman named Thompson, who in his letters to the American minister also refers to "that terrible Padre Maiz." Thompson was accused of being connected with a plot to murder the tyrant, and as at that time we had no diplomatic representative in Asuncion, Washburn made official representations on his behalf, and finally obtained his release from prison. As may be imagined, I was not a little curious to meet this figure of past

history, and Snead and I agreed that it would be best to go straight to him and ask his assistance in obtaining information in regard to the murder of our countryman. We arrived in the village at about four in the afternoon, and rode to the vicarage, inquiring of a peon if his reverence were in and would see us. The man replied in the affirmative, and, dismounting, we walked into a trimly kept garden in which jasmine and roses were blooming. Sitting beneath a shady tree we saw a priest studying a breviary, his lips moving as he repeated the words of holy script. He rose to greet us, and I thought I had never seen a more imposing figure of a man. He was of unusual height, standing probably six foot two, slim, with broad shoulders, and his well-worn cassock displayed his noble figure to full advantage. Though then well over eighty, he stood erect as a young man, and as he removed his hat I saw that his closely cut hair was only just beginning to turn grey. His eyes, which were dark and deep-set, were not yet dimmed with age, and revealed a high order of intelligence. His nose, curved and finely chiselled, indicated noble ancestry. His feet, narrow with high arched insteps, and his hands, delicate, yet full of character and strength, confirmed this impression of high breeding. It was the type of the soldier-priest, and one can imagine some of Loyola's followers looking like this. His voice was sonorous and low, and his enunciation and choice of words were those rather of a pure Castilian than a South American.

I explained the object of my visit, and the priest showed every disposition to assist me in bringing the murderers to justice. "In the morning," he said, "I will tell some of my people to talk to you."

He stated that Cunningham had trained his village choir, and played the organ in church, and that on his death, though he did not know to what faith he belonged, he had buried him in consecrated ground. "I was much attached to your countryman, señor," he added to me, "and we have often sat together here in this garden and talked of books and the outside world. I shall miss his companionship and his music." The voice was so gentle and apparently so sincere that I marvelled to think that it was "the terrible Padre Maiz" who was speaking. What manner of man was this who looked so noble and who spoke with such accents of sympathy of a murdered stranger? Why, the man before me had seen many and many a murder committed, and had himself put to the torture the victims of the tyrant's persecutions! I looked at the proud face, with its eagle glance, and debated in my own mind what had brought about his intimate association with a character so despicable as the second Lopez.

Of fear there could be no question, for courage was delineated in every feature ; courage, yes, and ambition, lust for power, I decided ; and I think that I was right.

We now returned to the *fonda* in the village, where we spent the night, and on the following morning, faithful to his promise, Padre Maiz put me in touch with such of the villagers as could give me information about the murderers of Cunningham. I took their evidence in writing, and on my return to Asuncion I was able to give the authorities sufficient proof to lead to the arrest and imprisonment of the two men concerned. Capital punishment is only very rarely inflicted in Paraguay, and in those days murder was regarded with greater tolerance by the law than destroying a neighbour's fence or cutting off a woman's hair—the latter being considered a very serious crime. From the evidence it appeared that Cunningham had had words with the two men, and that these had a few days later shot him down outside his house in cold blood and without any apparent provocation. I never saw Padre Maiz again, but some years later I heard of his death. He was certainly a remarkable man.

The richest and most fertile cattle country of Paraguay is known as the " Misiones." It was here that the Jesuits had their wealthiest and most important settlements, and even to-day, after the passage of over two centuries, this smiling land—*campo flor*, or flower country, as the Paraguayans call it—still retains the indelible impression of the Company of Jesus. It is now over fifteen years since I undertook this journey, and I cannot say what changes may have taken place in the Misiones, but I shall ever believe that, in the days when I travelled through, its inhabitants, rich and poor, lords and serfs, were the happiest people it has ever been my lot to meet.

The Misiones is a tract of land which stretches from a little south of the small town of Paraguari to the banks of the River Parana, and is divided up among various wealthy *estancieros*, or ranchmen, each estate providing employment to large numbers of peons or cowboys and their women and families. The Paraguayan peon is not fond of any form of manual labour, though, when needs must, he is an industrious and capable workman at almost any trade. But riding good horses and tending cattle and all the excitement of round-ups, lassoing, and branding are more as play to him than work. Moreover, his food is good, and as a relaxation he has horse-racing and cock-fighting on every Sunday and feast-day. The *estanciero* himself, except in time of war or revolution, when he usually appears in the guise of a *candillo*, or military chief, and enrolls his men to fight against his political opponents, is usually an indulgent and generous

master, and treats his henchmen with that mixture of easy familiarity and authority which is an essentially Spanish tradition. The master treats the man as friend and equal, and the peon responds by respecting the authority and superior position of his master, while, at the same time, as man to man, he considers himself just as good as he. The rich *estanciero* is a great power in the land, owning perhaps fifteen to twenty thousand head of cattle and half as many horses as well. He rides abroad in great pomp and ceremony, with his saddle, reins, and bit heavily ornamented with silver and even sometimes gold, while on his feet are solid silver spurs, often weighing more than a pound each.

An opportunity to visit the Misiones was given me by the arrival of Sir Walter Townley, the British minister to the Argentine Republic, who was accredited in a similar capacity to Paraguay. He was accompanied by his wife, Lady Susan Townley, and they were both anxious to make this journey and to visit the famous waterfalls of Yguazù. Having made the necessary arrangements and procured some fifteen horses for the trip, we made our start from Paraguari. In all my travels I have found it pleasanter as well as more practical to carry little or no baggage: a brush and comb, a toothbrush, a change of clothes in my wallet, with a poncho and a blanket strapped behind my saddle sufficed for my wants; and as regards food, I lived on the land, getting a meal when I could, or, if not, doing without it. In this way one travels light and fast, and one has no trouble with baggage animals and peons. It implies, however, a certain amount of roughing it, which tourists, and more especially lady tourists, do not, as a rule, appreciate. On this occasion we set out with a complete outfit of portmanteaux, tinned foods, beds, and even several cases of champagne, which were corded on the back of a small but sturdy pony that bore his burden, though with conscious effort, so unflinchingly that we named him Hercules. With our long pack-train our progress was necessarily slow, and might have been monotonous had it not been for the charm of the country-side. The first days we travelled through lanes of deep red sand, bordered on either side by magnificent orange-trees of great size and luxuriant foliage and fruit. The orange-trees of Paraguay are, I think, unique of their kind, for they flower and bear fruit at the same time, and the combination of dark green foliage, golden fruit, and delicate white, perfumed blossom is a very beautiful one. Tradition says that these trees were first introduced by the Jesuits, but the wild orange, at any rate, is certainly indigenous to the country, as its Guaraní name, *aepéú*, indicates.

Later on we emerged into an open country where the prairie,

covered with tiny violet and crimson flowers, stretched limitless before our vision. Here herds of long-horned cattle grazed, raising their heads as we passed, and gazing at us with wild, restless eyes. They represented the wealth of this fair land. The high road was not a little frequented by travellers coming and going from their *estancias*—tall, dark men in handsome dress and riding sleek horses richly caparisoned and decked with much silver finery. At night we slept at small villages, where the inhabitants received us with every hospitality and provided us with good food and clean beds with sheets ornamented with lace. It was veritably a land of plenty, and there were evidences of culture and refinement which I had not seen elsewhere in Paraguay, and which were no doubt an inheritance of the Jesuits which time had been unable to destroy. Presently we approached San Ignacio, in its day the main settlement of these soldier-priests. It was the hour of sunset, and from the hill we were descending we could see the old village, with its red tiled roofs, nestling in the hollow below, while from the ancient belfry of the half-ruined church the Angelus bell was tolling. The scene was one of peace and repose; there was no object to remind one of the world of hurry and bustle, for the passing of time had left this spot unchanged.

We put up at the inn, which was kept by a Spanish Basque, and which, though not as clean as the wayside houses where we had stopped, was not uncomfortable, and provided us with a good supper and a bottle or two of rough but palatable Spanish wine. On the following morning we visited the ruined church which dates from the early eighteenth century. It is a big, barn-like structure, evidently the rude work of Indian labour, and though it had weathered many storms in the past it was clear that its day was nearly over, for, in parts, the roof had fallen in, and some of the wooden pillars had rotted away. The interior was a bright mass of crude colours, the ceiling richly adorned with frescoes and the main altar of finely carved wood. In each corner of the church stood four life-sized figures of the Apostles, also of crude Indian work, but toned down by the passage of time. In the centre of the ceiling was depicted a huge head of a bull, whose eyes followed the visitor in a strange and menacing manner. At one of the smaller altars was an oil painting of Saint Ignatius, which, though cracked and in a bad state of repair, seemed to be of considerable antiquity and perhaps by a master hand. After seeing the church the old priest took us into an attic which was littered with all manner of strange things: heads of saints, earthenware vessels, clay figures of Indians and of various animals, water-jugs, and pieces

of richly carved wood lay about in reckless profusion. Among these was a beautifully carved life-sized donkey, which had, no doubt, been used in Easter processions. There was also a life-sized skeleton carved in wood. I asked the old priest what this could have been used for, and he replied that it probably dated back to the early days of the Jesuits, and that, as he imagined, when the Indians showed a disposition to become unruly it was taken out on a dark night, with a red-hot ember fixed in its jaws, and paraded about with the purpose of frightening them.

Having left a sum of money for the poor we returned to our hotel and, saddling our horses, once more took the road.

Our next halting-place was at Trinidad, once an important mission station, which was shown by the church and a number of well-built stone houses, the first we had seen on our journey. The village was, however, off the trade route, and was now only inhabited by some two hundred people. The inn where we stayed for the first night was kept by an old soldier who had fought with Urquiza, the Argentine *candillo*, and carried the scars of many a battle on his body. Innkeeping at Trinidad, he said, was not a lucrative business, because so few travellers came that way. He showed obvious satisfaction at our arrival, and provided us with a very fair supper, fodder for our animals, and clean, if somewhat primitive, accommodation. After the meal I invited the old soldier to discuss a bottle of sweet wine with me for the purpose of getting what information I could of this strange, forsaken spot. It was, he said, not an unsuitable place for a veteran to finish his days, being quiet and peaceful. Moreover, he owned a cow or two, and occasional travellers like ourselves added a few pesos to his hoard. His last visitor had been a German who came to seek for the hidden treasure of the Jesuits. Whether he found it or nor he couldn't say, but it was very likely, for he had brought with him a map from Berlin which indicated the exact position where it was buried. I asked the old man why he had not himself searched, but he said that the place was haunted by the *frailes* (the monks), and to attempt to recover their possessions would bring *mala suerte* (bad luck). On dark nights, before a storm, he continued, lights could be seen flickering about the old ruined church and convent, and in one of the windows he himself had often seen a bright light burning. "No," he concluded, "have nothing to do with such *brujerías*" (witchcraft). Having finished our bottle, I left the old man and retired to my room, and as I undressed I saw that my bedroom window looked out on the church. No lights were there visible, but this was perhaps because the young moon was shedding its silver radiance on the old ruined buildings and on

the dark forest beyond. It was a scene of beauty and perfect peacefulness.

On the following day we rode on to Jesús, which is about a league from Trinidad. The village, also once an important Jesuit station, is as deserted and neglected as the latter. I took a walk round the ruins and met an old man who told me that the two villages were connected by an underground passage, in which the Jesuits, just before their flight, had buried the bulk of their treasure. If I wished, he added, he would show it to me, and we wandered into the bush, where, sure enough, he showed me a deep hole in the ground where the masonry supporting an underground tunnel had fallen in. I asked the old man why he had not explored the tunnel and possessed himself of so much riches, and he replied, shaking his head, that it was a dangerous place to enter for there were many *duendes* (ghosts) there. I saw no reason, however, to be afraid of them in broad daylight, and I climbed down into the pit and saw before me, in effect, a wide tunnel, perhaps some ten feet high. I advanced cautiously, impelled by curiosity, but feeling highly nervous lest I might disturb a nest of rattle-snakes.

The masonry had fallen down in parts and let through a streak of light here and there, which served to guide my steps. The atmosphere was damp and chilly, and there was a smell of mould and decay which increased as I went on. After walking for about five minutes I came to a spot where the roof had again fallen in and let in the sun, which lighted up the tunnel for a considerable distance. At this moment my attention was attracted by some sign of life above my head, and looking closer I saw that the roof and part of the walls were thick with hornets' nests, and that these insects, disturbed by my approach, were beginning to move in an ominous manner. They were the large red hornets, and the natives always say that the sting of three of them will kill a man, and seven a horse. The sting affects the muscles of the throat, causing death by strangulation. It was not a pleasant thought, but fortunately the morning air was still chilly, even where the sun shone through, and the red hornets were comatose. Still the roof was alive with them, and they were certainly stirred by the unwonted presence of man, so I crept along very quietly, doing all I could to make myself as unobtrusive as possible. At length I reached the open space and clambered quickly out of the Jesuits' tunnel into the bright sunlight above. But, warm as it was, I shivered at the thought of what might have been my fate. I had no further desire to explore the spot, and the secret of the Jesuits—so well guarded by the red hornets—was safe so far as I was concerned.

I returned to the inn, where we lunched and resumed our journey, travelling southwards towards Villa Encarnacion, where we arrived in two days without meeting any adventure of note on the road. Villa Encarnacion is a small town on the right bank of the Parana River, and as it was our intention to visit the falls of Yguazù, we turned our horses out in a good paddock and embarked in a small river steamer for Puerto Aguirre, which is on the Argentine side, and the port of debarkation for the falls. The journey occupied four days, being often intercepted by stoppings at cuttings in the dense forests which line the banks of the Parana. We had left behind the peaceful meadow-scenery of the Missions, and were now in a tropical country where nature is more exuberant. The forest is beautiful and a blaze of colour—red, yellow, and purple—with the blossom of the flowering lepacho-trees, above which many varieties of palms raise their tall and graceful heads. The river is in flood and becoming more and more turbulent, and eddying whirlpools rise mysteriously on its surface. On the banks alligators sun themselves, small ones mostly and of a pale grey colour, which harmonizes perfectly with the rocks on which they lie. At midday we reached the conflux of waters where the three Republics, Brazil, Argentine, and Paraguay meet, and shortly after we landed on a steep bank which leads to a hut—dignified by the name of hotel—where travellers may obtain food and a means of locomotion to the falls, which are a couple of hours distant. We asked the owner of the hut—a small man with a very evil cast of countenance—to let us have some food and a conveyance, to which he assented with no very good grace, and was seen a minute or two after chasing a very lean pig, which he dropped cleverly with a shot from his revolver. He had evidently had plenty of practice with this weapon. Our lunch consisted of some fried eggs and some chops cut from the lean pig, and, not being very appetising, we were ready in a few minutes to make a start. Some time, however, elapsed before the vehicle which was to convey us there was ready. This proved to be an ancient stage-coach drawn by four mules, their dilapidated harness tied up in various places with pieces of string.

Our road lay through a cutting in the forest, which was so dense that the rays of the sun could not penetrate. Gorgeous orchids and “air-flowers” hung like jewels from the trees and gay painted butterflies flitted across our path, revelling in the warm, dank atmosphere. The thunder of the falls gradually increased as we drew nearer, and it became necessary to shout to make one’s voice heard. The mules breasted a steep bank, and with a mighty effort dragged the creaking old coach over the

summit, and then, halting for a breathing space, gave us our first view of the great Cataract of Yguazû—half a mile of angry, rushing, tearing water flecked with tawny foam, bursting over rocks and boulders, and falling with a loud roar some hundreds of feet below. The spray is dashed up high into the heavens, and the sun playing through this mist of water forms a rainbow whose varied hues give an air of fairy-like unreality to this scene. The spray descends in a perpetual shower on the trees and vegetation below, and causes it to grow with unwonted profusion and luxuriance. The brown colour of the rushing waters in spate, and the tawny foam curling in the rapids, adds to the imposing nature of the scene, which is one of Nature in her wildest and most majestic mood.

That night we slept in a small hut, provided for the accommodation of travellers, with the thunder of the falls as a lullaby, and returned the next morning to Puerto Aguirre in time to catch the steamer back to Villa Encarnacion. Here my companions embarked on another vessel for Buenos Ayres, and, after seeing them off I rounded up my horses and started on my homeward journey. The pack-horses had now no burden to carry, and we made good going, except when delayed by the rivers, which were in flood, as the rainy season had set in.

I reached Asuncion, however, without incident or adventure, on the evening of the eighth day after a pleasant journey.

CHAPTER XX

EL GRAN CHACO

THE Paraguayan Chaco is a vast and mainly unexplored territory, situated on the right bank of the River Paraguay, and stretching north right up to Bolivia and south to the Argentine.

The name Chaco means in the Indian language "a hunting ground," and it is peopled by a great number of tribes, some of whom are hostile and have never been conquered. Of the war-like tribes, the Chamacocos, the Ay Bravos, and the Simeonos are the principal. The Lenguas are more or less friendly to the white settlers, and some of them come in and work for brief periods on the *estancias*. The Chaco was better known to white men in bygone days than it is now. Thus Ayolas, one of the Spanish conquerors, travelled from what is to-day Fuerte Olimpo across the Chaco into Peru between the years 1536 and 1538. Ten years later his comrade in arms, Irala, striking a trail more to the south, accomplished a similar journey. No such journeys have been made in modern times, though two expeditions through the Chaco into Bolivia were attempted during my sojourn in Paraguay. In each case, however, the parties were attacked and massacred by the Indians before they had penetrated very far into the interior. An old Chaco explorer once told me that the golden rule in travelling in that country, amongst unfriendly tribes, is never for a moment, day or night, to have your rifle out of reach.

Among my friends in Asuncion was a young Italian named Boggiani. He was a distinguished landscape-painter, well known in Rome, and as well an ethnologist and botanist of no little repute. Boggiani lived in Asuncion, occupying himself with his art and scientific studies, but at some time every year the wilds called him, and he would make an expedition into the Chaco, returning with some delightful pictures of that little-known land and a valuable collection of its flora. He was a friend of the Indians, and when on his travels associated freely with them. His last journey, from which he never returned, was made, I think, in 1907 or thereabouts, and after some months of uncertainty as to his fate news was brought by some tame Indians that he had been massacred by a tribe of "Bravos" in the north. The Paraguayan Government sent out an expedition to recover my friend's body, and captured a cacique, or chief, of

the tribe which was believed to have been responsible for his death. This man was subsequently executed. The evidence obtained from the cacique and others showed that Boggiani was in the act of photographing the tribe when he was set upon and clubbed to death, without having a chance to defend his life. So I think the old explorer was right when he told me that when travelling through the Indian country a man must ever carry his rifle at the ready.

My first trip into the Chaco was made with my brother, when we ascended the River Pilcomayo in a small steam launch, and camped on its banks for a week, spending our time fishing and shooting. The sport obtained was not very good as the camp grass was higher than a man on horseback, making it impossible to even look for game. The heat, too, was very great, and a plague of insects of all kinds made life almost unbearable. We saw no Indians—indeed, it was impossible to see anything more than a couple of yards ahead owing to the thick, high grass. One incident remains in my mind, however. My brother shot one of the big black monkeys—*cai guazù*—and having taken the skin flung the body out into the river. As it fell with a great splash a huge fish rose and took the monkey, just as a trout may take a fly, and vanished from sight. It must have been a monster fish, for the *cai guazù*—its name means “big monkey” in Guarani—is no small mouthful, and it was taken without effort into these great jaws, of which we had only a glimpse for a brief fraction of a second. It was probably a species of fresh-water shark, called in Guarani *manguruyù*. I have never seen one of these, but have often heard natives speak of them, and a boatman on the Paraguay River, with whom I used to go fishing, told me that once, when in the water, he had been seized by the leg by one of these monsters, but managed by a supreme effort to wrench himself free.

There is another fish in Paraguayan waters which runs to a great size, the *surubi*, or tiger-fish, and it may have been one of these that took the big monkey. I killed one of these fish, which scaled seventy pounds, in the Paraguay River, but the natives maintain that they run up to two or even three hundred pounds in weight. A fish of this size would be well capable of attacking a man, as well as swallowing a large monkey, and my brother and I were careful not to venture into the deep waters of the Pilcomayo when we had our morning bath. The only other event of interest during our stay was that one morning I hooked a good sized *dorado*—literally, gold-fish—on a piece of red flannel for a fly. He was in excellent fighting trim, and dashed down the river with half my reel out

before I had time to draw breath. Unfortunately, a fallen tree lay across the river, and in this my line, of course, became entangled. I reeled up as fast as I could, and ran down to the spot, hoping by some stroke of luck to save my fish. But it was not to be. He was entangled in a branch of the tree by about a foot of line above the hooks, and as I reached the spot I distinctly saw the *dorado* run back, leap into the air, and bite the line (which was hanging to the branch) through with his powerful teeth. Fishermen's stories are proverbial, and I know this one will be received with incredulity, but it is nevertheless perfectly true.

The *dorado* is a very handsome fish, bright gold in colour, and in shape similar to a salmon, though he is not, I was informed by that eminent authority, Professor Boulanger of the Kensington Museum, related to the *Salmonidæ*. He is good to eat, the flesh being pink, and is perhaps the gamest fish that swims, putting up, when hooked, a fight stronger and fiercer, than even a Norwegian salmon. When on the feed he will, as has been seen, take a piece of red flannel, as perch and pike do in our waters. A large fly made of the red and green feathers of a parrot is also a good lure, but the most taking bait is a white fish about six inches long, very similar to our English bleak, and used as a spinning bait. When the *dorado* first seizes the bait, he does not swallow it, but merely holds it between his teeth and then leaps out of the water. One must not strike, therefore, before he has made this preliminary leap; then, however, strike hard home, and with luck you will have your reel spinning out as the *dorado* makes his rush for deeper waters, leaping into the air as he goes. His fight and dash are extraordinary, and you are never sure of him until he is in the boat and you yourself are pretty tired out, with a burnt finger or two where they have come in contact with the line. The average size of a *dorado* is from ten to twenty pounds, but they are said to run up to as much as seventy pounds, though I have never caught or even seen one as large.

The known fish of the South American rivers interested me greatly, but what fascinated me even more was the thought of the unknown and perhaps gigantic specimens which are hidden in these waters. If one could only have dammed and drained a portion of one of these rivers! Once, when spinning for *dorado* all the morning, I had no luck, for the fish weren't feeding and the only bite I had was from a kingfisher, which picked my bait off the water and flew away with it for a few yards. He soon, to my relief, dropped the suspicious thing, for I feared that the beautiful bird might become entangled in my hooks. After this incident I pulled into a bank and, disgusted with my luck, let

the bait sink to the bottom. The water by this bank was very deep. Presently, as I was about to pull in my bait, I felt a resistance, and thinking it was caught in a root, I gave a sharp pull, on which I felt something which was clearly of enormous weight move and slowly forge ahead. There was no sharp turn or fight; the thing just went forward, and as my line, which was strong enough to hold a young alligator, became taut, it broke as if it were a piece of cotton. I think that my face must have been white with excitement during the few seconds that I felt this monster fish, which gave me the impression of being at least as long and heavy as the boat in which I was sitting. It may have been a *manguruyù*, or perhaps a gigantic tiger-fish of five or six hundred pounds, or some perfectly unknown aquatic monster. Who can tell?

The attraction which anything red has for European fishes in general is well known. Flies tied with a red feather or two are amongst the most killing for trout and salmon; perch and pike will often take greedily on a piece of red flannel, and even mackerel may be caught in the same way. In tropical waters this attraction is equally marked, and I once heard a curious story, the truth of which I have no reason to doubt. An English cargo steamer anchored about a mile off the Chilian port of Antofagasto, and the captain having refused to allow any of the crew to go ashore, three of the men slipped overboard just after the hour of sunset with the intention of swimming ashore. Two of them were entirely naked, and a third wore a pair of red bathing drawers. What they intended to do on arrival at the port in this state of nudity is not clear; but sailors are queer folk. But they had not got very far on their way when the man in the *red drawers* was attacked by some large fish, and after a few seconds disappeared from sight, leaving the stain of his blood on the waters. The two other men, seeing the fate of their companion, swam back to their ship as fast as they could, but unmolested. They said that they did not see the fish which attacked their companion, and that it was therefore unlikely to have been a shark, whose fin is always visible on the top of the water. The man seemed, however, to have been seized from below, and the attack to have been so powerful and savage that he was instantly disabled and sank. What fish was it? Perhaps a kind of Pacific ground shark, or a barracoute, which is believed to attack human beings. No one will ever know: but whatever it may have been, it is sufficiently remarkable that it was attracted or rendered ferocious by seeing red in the water, and that the other two men, who were naked, were unmolested.

Discussing the matter once with the captain of one of the

P.S.N.C. boats, a man of over sixty who had been at sea since a boy, he told me that he had, on more than one occasion, seen men who had fallen overboard disappear, apparently after being attacked by some fish, but that he had never seen a man taken by a shark. In fact, the captain believed that there were fish in the seas which attacked human beings and were more dangerous than sharks.

Another unpleasant fish in Paraguayan waters and one which is not uncommon, is the stinging ray, which looks something like a large sole with a long tail and a spike at the end—not unlike that of the devil's tail in mediaeval history. The sting of the ray is poisonous and extremely painful and even dangerous, the pain being acute for several hours. This poison ray is good eating, tasting very much like his innocuous relative of the seas which may often be seen in London fish shops.

Perhaps the most dangerous inhabitant of Paraguayan waters is the *piraña*, which I suspect of causing more loss of life to man and beast than alligators, *surubis*, or *mangarujus*, and such like aquatic monsters. The *piraña* is a scaled fish, similar in shape to our European perch, only the head is of more aggressive appearance, the mouth being armed with a most formidable set of teeth, more like those of a wild animal than a fish. With these, and aided by his powerful jaws, there is literally nothing that he will not bite through. I have put a lead pencil into the mouth of one, and seen it bitten clean off, and I have also seen him bite off the edge of a keenly tempered knife. His ferocity is equally developed, and one has to be very careful in handling these demons when caught, and when getting the hooks out of their mouths. When taken out of the water they make a barking noise, though not so loud and distinct as that made by the *bagre*, to which I have alluded in a previous chapter.

The *piraña*, though bony, is fair eating, and for his size—they rarely run to more than a pound or so—gives good sport. One variety, when taken out of the water, is beautifully coloured, red, green, and yellow; but, like the mackerel, these colours quickly fade with death.

In some parts of South America this fish goes by the name of *palometa*, but I am not sure whether this is not really a different variety of *piraña*. These fish are very dangerous to bathers, and when in the water one has to be careful to keep in constant movement to ward off his attacks. If you stand still for a moment you will probably feel a sharp pain in your foot or leg, and on looking you will see that a small circle, about an inch in diameter, has been bitten clean out. This attack is made by a solitary fish, but if you happen to run against a shoal

of them the chances are that, unless you can quickly spring out of the water, you will, in an incredibly short space of time, be torn to bits. I have myself suffered from the bites of solitary *pirañas*, and also had my horses bitten while bathing them. In the case of horses, they usually select a place on the coronet where the flesh is soft, and I found the wounds thus made apt to fester and not a little difficult to heal.

A Minister of Foreign Affairs in Asuncion once told me an unpleasant tale in which the *piraña* fish and man played a part. The scene was laid in the State of Matto Grosso, which lies to the north of Paraguay, and was one of the most turbulent and least peaceful spots of South America, where, in the days of which I write, revolutions were matters of almost everyday occurrence. On one of these occasions, my informant stated, after a battle, in which the revolutionary party had taken a number of prisoners, their captors said to them, "*Los pobres pescados tienen hambre*" ("The poor fish are hungry"), and, giving them with their knives a slash across the stomach, sufficient to make the blood flow, they threw them into the river, where the *pirañas*, attracted in thousands by the blood, literally disembowelled them.

I will mention one more story of the *piraña*, after which enough will have been said to show that he is, indeed, a most unpleasant fish.

A friend of mine, a police inspector, while bathing, was attacked by a shoal of them, which mutilated him in such a manner that he at once swam back to the bank to the spot where his clothes were, picked up his revolver, and blew out his brains.

Although in the vast plains and forests of the Chaco there is a considerable amount of big game, yet the number of wild animals has been very much reduced by the nomad Indians, who settle in a likely spot and only move on when they have exhausted the opportunities of obtaining food by hunting.

These nomad Indians, whose weapons are bows and arrows, are extremely skilful hunters and, above all, trackers, and stalk their quarry until they are within a few yards of it. No white man can ever hope to get as close to game as they, and at this short distance they rarely, if ever, miss their aim. To go out after big game with an Indian is an education, and generally a humiliation, to the keenest and most experienced sportsman, for to them forest and plain are as an open book, and they follow a track which is imperceptible to a white man, in a manner which is both bewildering and disconcerting.

Once when out with a half-tame Indian who used to accompany me on my hunting expeditions in the Chaco, he pointed out to me the faint track of some beast in the forest which, he said, was

an animal whose footprints he and his people knew well, but which none of them had ever seen. I was intensely interested, and felt myself face to face with a mystery which perhaps neither I nor any white man would ever solve. Probably the track was of some nocturnal animal which could perhaps only be seen flitting through the jungle on some moonlight night. But the Indians are never abroad at night, for they are far too frightened of the evil spirits which they firmly believe haunt the thickness of the forest. Some of the forests have a more evil reputation in this respect than others, and I have even heard of an educated Englishman who believed in the presence of these evil spirits who lured men to their doom.

Apart from spirits, the Chaco forest is certainly a dangerous place at night, for this is the time when the jaguar, the king of the jungle, is abroad and hungry for his meal. Once when out hunting with my friend Leonard Talbot we got separated, and I, after several attempts to find the track which led back to the ranch, gave it up and decided to stay where I was for the night. This is always the wisest thing to do when you are lost, for otherwise you may wander about helplessly, tire yourself out, and get really lost for good and all. Besides, if you stay where you are somebody is certain to come out the next morning with an Indian tracker and find you easily enough. So I dismounted, off-saddled my horse, tied him up with my lasso so that he could crop the pampa grass, and then set about making a bed with my saddle and a blanket under a sheltering tree. By the time this was done the sun was beginning to set, and as there is no twilight in these latitudes, I quickly set to work finding some wood to build a fire, for the evening was cool and I needed it both for warmth and for a protection against any wild beasts which might be about. The supply of dry wood was soon collected and deposited near my couch, and, having lit the fire, I went to have a look at my horse, who had at first started to crop the young grass eagerly and then, having wandered to the end of his tether, had stopped feeding and was standing, his head up and sniffing the air. Something had given him a fright, and approaching him, I soon saw what it was, for in the marshy ground where he was standing I saw clearly the tracks of two jaguars, full-grown beasts to judge by the size of their spoor. The horse was a young and nervous animal which had been spoilt in the breaking, and, as is usual in those cases, he had no use for men. His fear was, however, so great now that he was glad to have me near him, and he followed me as I went back to shorten his lasso. The tracks were at least twelve hours old, so I thought it unlikely that he had seen the tigers, but he probably

smelt them, for a horse's sense of smell is very acute. Picking up my rifle and throwing a good log on the fire, I went down to the thicket in the direction of which he had been looking to see if anything was visible, and also if my own sense of smell could detect the presence of the jaguar, for this sense is keenly developed in me, and I have often been able to smell when a fox or some other animal has crossed my path, especially in the early morning when the ground is undisturbed. However, on this occasion I could neither see nor smell anything, and I returned to my couch, where I found my horse lying down not more than three or four yards from the fire, which instinct must have told him was the safest place when wild animals were about. After smoking a couple of cigarettes in lieu of supper and making a big fire which would last for some hours, I wrapped myself up in my poncho and slept fairly soundly, with some wakeful intervals when I replenished the fire, until dawn. I awoke chilled by the heavy dew, which had wetted my poncho and bed as thoroughly as if it had been raining. As soon as it was sufficiently light to see, I saddled up my horse, and having recovered my sense of direction, soon struck the homeward trail, and my horse being as anxious as I was to get home, I gave him his rein and galloped along until we reached the ranch.

Some months after this event Talbot visited me in Asuncion and told me that he had discovered a place about a day's ride from his ranch where *ciervo* abounded, and which the Indians called the home of the *ciervo*. Would I come and have a try for one? I needed no pressing and agreed to return with him a few days later and see if I could get a chance of bagging one of these animals. The *ciervo* or marsh stag (*Cervus palludiensis*) is the largest of the deer family found in South America, and about the same size as our Scottish deer, and carries good antlers. If wounded, the *ciervo* will often attack his aggressor, and is then a very formidable foe.

My friend Talbot had had some months previously an adventure with one which came near to costing him his life. It happened in the following way: One day, not far from his ranch in the Chaco, he saw a stag which he successfully stalked until he got into easy range, when he fired, the animal falling apparently dead. Talbot ran, knife in hand, to give the *coup de grâce*, and just as he was about to do so, the *ciervo* got up and charged, and, putting his horn through the upper part of my friend's thigh, fell down dead on top of him. Talbot was a very powerful man, but he was unable to move under the heavy beast, and he lay there, his life-blood welling out and expecting death. He did not lose consciousness, and

said afterwards he felt no pain, and that his sensations were even pleasant ones. After a time he lost so much blood that he became unconscious, and would no doubt never have awoken from his swoon had it not been that one of his men, hearing a shot fired, had followed his tracks and found his master's body just in time to drag the stag off and to staunch the wound. Having done this he returned to the ranch for help, and with the aid of two other men carried the wounded man home and to bed. He was soon up and about again, but, as is generally the case with wounds of this nature, it took a long time to heal completely. His adventure was a warning to all of us to be careful in approaching a wounded *ciervo*.

On the morning following our arrival in the Chaco I set out with a Gaucho named Blas on horseback for the "home of the *ciervos*." My companion, a good-looking, dare-devil sort of fellow, was both a fine horseman and hunter, and he suggested that we should first have a look at an *isla*, or clump of forest in the plain, where he had recently seen a jaguar. I was armed with an ordinary Winchester, not a very powerful or accurate weapon, and only three cartridges, as they were rather short of ammunition at the ranch, and, as it was out of repair, I had left my own rifle in Asuncion. On arrival at the *isla* we tied up our horses and made our way into the thick jungle, and after walking for a few minutes Blas silently pointed to recent jaguar tracks, and made signs to me that the beast was not very far off. We then went on, carefully examining every big tree which was in sight, for it was in one of them that he expected to find him. In spite of the many disappointments that fall to the lot of the jaguar-hunter, it is always a thrilling moment when you know that you are in close proximity to the king of the South American jungle.

On this occasion it was doubly exciting, for, if treed, he might leap down on one of us from behind. Again, there was a possibility that instead of the spotted variety it might be a black jaguar, and in that case the danger, without dogs as we were, was a very considerable one. The black jaguar, or *Tigre negro*, though always a comparatively rare beast, is still not infrequently found in the Chaco, and the native hunters hold him in great awe, for he is a bold and cunning beast, and if he realizes that he is being hunted will circumvent the hunter and follow in his rear. I have known natives who, when they think they are on his tracks, would turn round and go home rather than follow on and risk an encounter with him.

The black tiger is an extremely handsome animal with a dappled coat, and of the same size as an ordinary jaguar. I

once saw one for a few seconds drinking at sunset by the River Teticuary, and was much impressed by its remarkable grace and beauty. Unfortunately I had not my rifle handy, but at the best it could only have been a quick snapshot. But to return to our present hunt: careful examination of the trees revealed nothing, and we presently emerged at the other end of the *isla*; and as we did so Blas called out, "*Alliva,*" and I just caught sight of a long, low body creeping through the tall grass and into another larger jungle a couple of hundred yards away. Blas had been right, and we must have been quite close to him, but we decided that it was not worth while without dogs to waste any more time in following him up. So we remounted and pursued our way over the plain, keeping a sharp look out for *ciervo*, though the prairie grass was so high that for the most part, unless we were on rising land, we could see nothing in front of us. To overcome this difficulty, however, Blas halted every now and again and standing up in his saddle managed to get a good view over the country-side. After riding on a bit we came to a lagoon where a wonderful sight lay before our eyes, for a whole flock of black ibis had alighted there. These beautiful birds are almost the size of a swan, and black in colour with white heads and a scarlet necklace round the throat. There were, perhaps, over a hundred on the lagoon, some swimming, some flying overhead, while others were wading in the shallow water, at intervals searching in the mud for small fish or other food.

I was anxious to obtain a specimen, and picking out one of the birds flying I fired a shot from my Winchester. My aim was faulty, however, but a second shot struck true, and the ibis fell dead at the edge of the lagoon. Having picked it up and admired the beautiful bird, I debated with Blas as to what we should do now, for the sun was already high in the heavens, and the jungle world had retired for rest in the forest or the long pampa grass, which was an effectual hiding-place from the eye of the hunter. So we decided to ride on to an eminence in the plain where one or two shady trees grew, to eat our lunch, and then take a siesta. The heat was very great, and after our frugal meal I laid my head on my saddle and was soon fast asleep. My nap must have lasted for over an hour, when I was awakened by Blas pulling at my arm, and as I sat up he whispered to me, "*Padron, hay un ciervo abajo grande en el estero*" ("Master, there is a big stag down below in the marsh"). I rose to my knees and following the direction of his hand, I saw clearly a big red stag with a fine head of antlers feeding about three hundred yards from the spot where we had been lying. Taking

the direction of the wind, and picking up the rifle, which was loaded with my one remaining cartridge, I started off to stalk the stag, bending low in the tall grass as I went. Coming out, as had been my intention, on to some open ground, I saw to my great relief that the stag was still there and about a hundred and fifty yards away. But he was evidently alarmed, for his head was up and his nostrils were sniffing the air as if he scented danger. He made a beautiful and unforgettable picture ; but there was no time to lose, and, aiming for the shoulder, I gently squeezed the trigger. The bullet struck true, and my heart leapt as I saw the noble animal sink to his knees.

My satisfaction was short lived, however, for in a moment he was up again and spurted off at considerable speed, in spite of the fact that his near foreleg was completely useless and dangled on the ground. Before he had gone far, however, he stopped again, and, abandoning my now useless rifle, I drew a large hunting-knife which I carried and was after him as fast as I could run. The stag allowed me to come within a dozen yards of him, and then stood at bay with head down ready to attack if he got the opportunity. I remained concealed in the long reeds of the marsh, but could see that my bullet had completely broken his shoulder, and must have also severed a big artery, for the wound was bleeding profusely. But there was still a great deal of life in the animal, and his eyes, which were fixed on me, were wicked and menacing. I felt that in a rough-and-tumble, armed only with a knife, I should probably get the worst of it, so I determined to merely keep him in sight and wait until Blas came up, as I felt he would be sure to do. The *ciervo* then moved off, and in my anxiety to keep him in sight I followed too closely, for he suddenly charged, and I only saved myself by throwing myself headlong from a bank on which I was standing. Getting up, I drew back a few yards, and to my relief saw Blas approach. He had no arms other than his knife, and when he reached my side he looked in a very doubtful way at the gleaming eye of the *ciervo*, and then said, " Patron, you'd much better leave that beast, for without munition for your rifle it is a dangerous job to try and tackle him. He won't go far with that broken shoulder, and we can easily come out to-morrow and get him." Blas was no doubt right, but I couldn't stomach the idea of leaving the poor beast out all night ; and besides, the spirit of the chase was strong in me. I told my companion this, and he said, " Very well. I'll go and get my lasso off my saddle." He was away some twenty minutes, and meanwhile the *ciervo* after walking some three or four hundred yards, lay down, and I thought that his end was near. Since I

had wounded him he had gradually made for higher land, and with the instinct that wounded animals have, he was evidently trying to make his way for the great forest which lay far away on the horizon.

When Blas returned with his lasso the stag was still lying down, but, owing to the high grass and reeds, it was difficult, if not impossible, to throw it. On his suggestion, therefore, I tried with my long knife to cut a clear space round the animal. This was ticklish work, and several times the *ciervo* made as if to charge me, keeping his angry eyes fixed on every one of my movements. At length, when the space was cleared, Blas threw his lasso, but missed, the iron ring of the lasso merely striking the stag on the horns, and in a moment he was off like a flash, galloping as if unwounded and disappearing into the long grass. "Back to our horses," I shouted to Blas, who followed me, coiling his lasso as he went. Racing to the spot where the horses were tethered we sprang into the saddle and galloped off in pursuit of the stag, which was heading for the distant forest. But our horses being fresh after their rest and feed we soon overtook him, and this time Blas' lasso fell true over the *ciervo's* horns. Jumping off my horse I quickly dispatched him with my knife, and the chase was over. We then loaded Blas' reluctant pony with the skin, antlers, and the choicest portions of the meat and made for the ranch. That evening we sat till late over the camp fire while I told the story of my day's hunting.

My brother, whose name has already been mentioned in these pages, was for a number of years manager of a ranch in the Chaco, situated in the territory of the Lengua Indians, and the information which he has given me about this interesting nomad tribe forms, I think, a fitting conclusion to this chapter. It will give some idea of the vastness of this land when I say that the *estancia* which he controlled covered an area of eight thousand square miles, which is equal to the size of Serbia before the war.

On this tract of land forty thousand head of cattle and over a thousand horses and mules were grazed. The Indians inhabiting this district are commonly known as Lenguas, though their proper designation is really the Macoys. Numbering from five to six thousand, they are a docile, unaggressive people who live by hunting and fishing. Some of them possess firearms, but the majority still use bows and arrows, with which they will even face the jaguar. Like all Indians, they are expert trackers, and when following game cover themselves with palm-leaves and move very slowly, thus being able to approach within a few yards of their quarry.

They are also eaters of fish and alligators, and the strong smell which they emit is mainly due to the large quantities of alligator flesh which they consume. The *Lenguas* use mainly spears for fishing, but occasionally, when they can get hold of a piece of wire, they convert it into a hook and make a line from the leaves of the wild pine-apple (*Bromelia*). One of their favourite dishes for food is the lung fish, which they dig out of almost dry mud. The lung fish resembles eel in appearance and is about two feet long and ten inches in diameter. It has strong teeth, and can inflict a very severe bite if the captor is unwary.

After a large haul the fish are boiled in a great pot, round which the Indians sit in a circle, and when the dish is ready help themselves in order of precedence, that is to say, beginning with the cacique and the chiefs, who all use the shell of a large fresh-water mussel in place of a spoon. They do not, however, swallow the morsel, but chew it, afterwards throwing it back into the pot for the remainder to eat. This peculiar custom is, strangely enough, only followed when fish is eaten; meat or game is chewed and swallowed in the ordinary way. Though salt is abundant in the Chaco it is not used by the Indians.

Other favourite foods of these Indians are palm-tops, ostrich and other eggs, which they prefer, however, when the chick is about to be hatched out. This is considered a very delicate morsel. Food of all kinds is common property, and is divided equally among the tribe, so that this primitive people forms a remote branch of the Socialists of the world.

The dress of the men consists of a long blanket which reaches to the feet and is worn in the tent and on the march. For the war-dance or actual fighting the blanket is discarded and the face and body painted blue. For mourning the face is painted black and white. The hair is worn down to the shoulders. The men are well-made and of handsome physique, usually from five foot nine to five foot ten inches in height.

The women wear a tight petticoat of dressed deer-skin, but are naked from the waist upwards. They also paint their faces with vegetable pigments, but it is amusing to note that they bestow greater care and take a longer time to do up their complexion than the men. They are small in stature, but up to the age of fifteen often quite good-looking. They are completely unmoral, and from the age of seven years upwards indulge freely in sexual intercourse with the boys of the tribe, until they marry, when they remain faithful to their husbands. During the period before marriage they rarely have children, conception being prevented by the use of plants and herbs known only to themselves, the secret of which they have never divulged to the white

men. After marriage they seldom have more than one or at the most two children, any who are born in excess of this number being strangled by the old women who are attached to each *toldo* (hut) for this purpose.

Like all Indian races, the Lenguas have naturally but little hair on their bodies, and what they have is carefully removed in the case of both sexes. Thus the moustache, beard, eyelashes, eyebrows, and all are plucked out hair by hair with the fingers, the members of the tribe assisting one another in this important part of their toilet.

The Lenguas are secretive about remedies used in treating sickness, but some of these are known. For instance, for asthma, to which they are subject, the tongue of the tiger, dried and pulverized, is made into tea and taken internally. The fat of the tiger is also used for rheumatism. The treatment for snake-bites is very interesting because it is usually successful where, not infrequently, European science fails. Immediately after the man has been bitten his companions fall on him, one sucking the puncture where the snake has struck with his fangs, and the others sucking his chest and arms with so much energy that they presently fall back exhausted. After this the patient is said to be cured, and to suffer but little subsequent inconvenience from the effect of the poison.

The *toldos*, or huts, of the Lenguas are merely a temporary lean-to made with palm-leaves, with a few skins of wild animals on the floor. They move into fresh quarters when the vermin become too numerous, fish and game scarce, or a death occurs.

In the case of death the dead man's possessions are broken up and scattered to the four winds, the orifices of his body are stopped with bee's wax in order to prevent the spirit escaping, and it is buried secretly in the forest, none but the medicine men know where. The dying are killed before sunrise with a club by the witch-doctor, all their bones being broken, and the old and infirm are treated in a similar manner.

The Lenguas have no belief in any god, but believe that the dead return to earth in the form of malignant spirits which haunt the forests and are tangible but not visible. The Paraguayans working on the *estancias* often themselves become imbued with these superstitions, and I have known more than one who claims to have heard these spirits calling from the forests. An Englishman of my acquaintance also once told me that he had heard them. The voice, he said, was shrill but distinctly human, and unlike that of any known bird or beast.

My brother lived among the Lenguas for ten years, and liked

them in the same manner that they liked and respected him as a just man.

In this part of the Chaco a small crab, of a brilliant red colour, is common in the brackish creeks, and my brother would often catch and have boiled a dish of these for his eating.

So from the beginning the Indians, most of whom had never before seen a white man, knew him as "the man who eats crabs."

CHAPTER XXI

REVOLUTIONS

FROM the earliest times the political history of Paraguay has been a troubled one, and during the seven years that I was in the country four revolutions occurred. The first of these was comparatively mild; the others, with which was brought into relatively close contact, were more serious disturbances of the public order.

At the outbreak of the revolution which occurred in 1904 several of my neighbours who had, no doubt, good reason to fear the enmity of one or another of the two parties—the Reds and the Blues—came to my gates, imploring asylum for themselves, their women and children. Firing was going on at the time, and in a weak moment I yielded to their solicitations. There was a fair-sized pavilion in my garden, and in this the refugees, some twenty in number, took up their abode. Their simple cooking they did in native fashion, over a brazier in the open, so that they did not really incommode me to any great extent. But whenever I went into town or for my ride in the evening they always expressed great alarm, the women screaming, “*Alli va nuestro salvador*” (“There goes our saviour”), as I mounted my horse at the gate of my house. An incident which occurred shortly after showed that these fears were not altogether without foundation.

Just before the outbreak of the revolution my rank had been raised from that of H.M. Consul to that of Chargé d’Affaires with the local rank of second secretary in the Diplomatic Service, so that my official residence had become a Legation, and was consequently endowed with these extra-territorial rights which enabled me to afford asylum to political refugees if I felt so disposed. One evening, on returning from my ride, I was surprised to see several policemen with a police officer standing before my front door. On inquiring their business, the latter replied in an insolent manner that he had come to arrest one of my refugees, a man named Don Juan, a well-known Liberal. This police officer, before my arrival, had attempted to gain admission to my house, but my servant had refused to open the gate, which was always locked when I was away from home. On reflection I came to the conclusion that this was merely an attempt on the part of the police either to exact money from any of the political refugees, or to satisfy some private vengeance,

and that, in all probability, they were not acting under direct orders from the Government. This being so, I decided to give the police officer a pretty frank piece of my mind, after which I told him that I should forcibly resist any attempt on his part to enter my house. On hearing this, after uttering some threats, he and his men went away.

I found my refugees in a pitiable state of nerves. They said that the police officer in question was a brute in human form—he certainly had not a pleasant face—and that he was known all over the town by the nickname of “Torquemada,” from the tortures he was accustomed to inflict on his prisoners. That if I had not arrived in the nick of time he would certainly have forced himself into the house and carried off the Liberal, Don Juan, whose numerous female relatives were weeping in a circle around me, and showering blessings on the head of *nuestro salvador*. I began to think that political refugees were somewhat of a nuisance, and wished I had been more hard-hearted when they claimed admittance. I had noticed, too, that one of the ladies of the party appeared to spend the whole of the time weeping. She was a woman who had not been endowed by nature with any of the charms of beauty, and her tear-swollen features made an unpleasant effect on me whenever I met her. She seemed to be always waiting for me round some corner, and as soon as I approached let loose the flood-gates of her tears. Like a good many men I dislike and rather mistrust a woman’s tears, which are often her easiest as well as her strongest weapon. One day this dolorosa intercepted me as I was going out of my gate, and I asked her somewhat roughly what she was always crying for. “Ah, sir!” she said, “it is for my poor brother, a Liberal” (I was getting very tired of Liberals), “who is hidden in a pit in a wood near here. There are snakes in the pit, and he has no food and daren’t come out, for if the Reds caught him they would cut his throat. Save him, Your Excellency, and you will have a sister’s eternal gratitude.” Here was, then, the reason for this parade of woe which she had obtruded on my notice for so many days. I told her I could do nothing, but she did not move from her suppliant attitude, and the tears streamed down her face, till—finally conquered, but angry at my own weakness—I said, “Tell him that I will ride out at the end of the week, and if possible bring him back,” upon which I fled from the ardour of her gratitude. The message was duly delivered to the unknown Liberal who was hiding in the hole filled with snakes, and on the appointed day I set forth, riding my old loped racing pony Nambishai.

At a spot which had been indicated to me by the weeping

sister, about fifteen miles away from Asuncion, I was to halt before a post and rails, when on my calling "*Ave Maria*"—the usual indication in South America that one's mission is one of peace—an old woman would appear, let down the rails, and ask me into her ranch to drink *maté*, after which the Liberal would be produced from the hole in the woods.

As soon as I got out of the town I put my horse into a gallop, and avoiding the main roads arrived at my rendezvous, called the password, upon which everything happened according to plan. After a wait of some twenty minutes in the old woman's hut she returned with a pale and dishevelled youth, who, to my disgust, wore round his neck the emblem of his political faith, a pale blue silk handkerchief. I ordered him roughly to take the thing off and leave it with the old woman, who proved to be his mother, and to mount the *picaso* which she had saddled for him. Escaping hurriedly from the showers of blessings which now descended on my head, I vaulted into the saddle and set off at a smart pace in the direction of home, congratulating myself on the success of my journey. But my satisfaction was short-lived, for, on rounding a bend in the road, I was stopped by a mounted patrol under the command of a sergeant, who somewhat roughly told me that we were his prisoners, and that he had instructions to bring us before the *comandante* in the adjacent village of Limpio. He added that we were to ride in front and that his men had orders to fire if we attempted to escape. Here, then, was a pretty state of affairs. I, the representative of His Britannic Majesty, arrested by a rascally troop of ignorant Indian soldiers, none of whom could speak Spanish. Serve me right for being such a fool, I thought. What made me still more angry was that I overheard the sergeant say to one of his men, "That's a nice horse the gringo is riding; it will come in handy for my own use when we've finished with him." All my life I have been most particular not to lend my horses even to my good friends, and the fellow's insolence rubbed me on the raw. As for the Liberal, his face was paler than ever, and he made up his mind that the time for throat-cutting had arrived. It was evident that some spy had been watching the wood where he was concealed and had reported to the patrol as soon as he emerged from it. But resistance was impossible, and I rode along with half a score of cocked rifles levelled at the small of my back. I wished with all my heart that I had never listened to the entreaties of that wretched Liberal's lachrymose sister. In due course we arrived at Limpio, and were escorted to the *jefatura*, where the sergeant halted his patrol and went in to report his capture. A few minutes later the *Jefe politico*, a sort of military

mayor of the village, came out, and the sergeant ordered me to to dismount, but I paid no attention to his order, for a man sitting on horseback has an immense superiority over a man on foot, clothed though he may be with little brief authority. The *Jefe* was a small, squat and very dark man with beetling eyebrows. He had a rifle slung over his back, a revolver at each hip, and, attached to his belt, a bloodthirsty looking *facon*, or sword dagger. As might be expected from one so swashbuckling in appearance he addressed me in a very truculent tone, asking me to account for myself being found in the companionship of a rebel—a well-known and dangerous enemy of the State. Here the wretched stripling at my side shivered with apprehension at hearing himself thus described. Probably his political activities had been confined to a harmless preference for a blue handkerchief round his neck to a red one. But the charge was a serious one, and he looked, and no doubt was, frightened, for in times of revolution a throat is easily cut, and no questions asked. Assuming myself a domineering tone, I informed the *Jefe* that the boy had been in my employment for some six months past, and that he had gone to visit his mother with my permission and had been too frightened to return, owing to the presence of the troops. My story was, of course, not true, but as the youth's life was at stake I thought that a little deviation from facts would be forgiven by the Recording Angel. I added, as was perfectly true, that the servants of a diplomat were exempt from arrest, and I demanded that both he and I should be at once released from the unwarrantable and illegal detention. If he wished, I told the *Jefe*, he could send a messenger with us to Asuncion, and that General Caballero, the Minister of War there, would confirm my words. But I warned him that it was to his own interests to release us without delay, as he would find himself in very serious trouble if he did not. My words carried weight, for, after some further argument, the *Jefe* said I could go, but the boy must remain. I saw, nevertheless, that Authority was nervous, and not at all sure that he would not get into trouble over the business, so I harangued him for several minutes in the most overbearing manner, when, suddenly changing my tone, I appealed to his good sense and patriotism to allow me and my servant to return without further molestation. I was, I said, a good friend of the country, and did not wish that one of its distinguished officers should get into trouble through any fault of mine. My knowledge of the people stood me in good stead; I had first rattled the man and then given him a loophole which saved his pride. So Authority unbent, and on patriotic grounds he would consent to release us—Great Britain was a friend of

his State. Yes—perhaps he was exceeding his powers, but he would take the responsibility—we might go. But would the *Señor Ministro* not dismount and take a *copita* of rum after his long and fatiguing journey. “Yes, with much pleasure,” I said, for I knew he would not dare to cut my throat. So we sat down for a minute, while the Liberal, very uneasy at the absence of his protector, held my horse outside. We then departed with all the honours of war; the *Jefe* wrung my hand and said he was my humble servant; the sergeant and soldiers, though doubtless much disappointed that there was to be no throat-cutting, saluted smartly as we rode off, and the Liberal, relieved from the prospect of a painful death, also bowed his adieux. Putting my horse into a canter, we rode on in silence till we were nearing home, when Francisco—for that was the boy’s name—said, “Sir, did the *Gobierno Ingles* (the English Government) order you to come and save me?” I replied that the Government of our King stood for law and order and justice in every corner of the world, and that I, as His Majesty’s representative, had, amongst other duties, to see that no one was treated unjustly or came to his death in any part of the world without a proper legal trial. Francisco was evidently duly impressed by what I said, which was, after all, a true enough statement in the year of grace when this incident occurred. A few minutes after the lad was enveloped in the embrace of his still-weeping sister, who also threw herself at my feet and poured out her thanks and eternal obligation for the service I had rendered her. Perhaps she was sincere—who knows? but, in my experience, true gratitude is a flower which blooms but rarely in any country.

My next experience of revolution was a more exciting one.

One morning I was awakened by a sound of firing, and going out into the street, in pyjamas, I ascertained that a body of rebels had occupied the height overlooking the town and were investing it. I returned, dressed, and breakfasted with good appetite, for, I must confess, that in the small experience I have had the sound of battle has a very exhilarating effect. A revolution was in progress, and it was my duty to obtain all the information that I could, and to protect British property. After breakfast I accordingly set off in the direction of the *Palacio*, the building containing the Presidential and Government offices, which was in the vicinity of my house. Before the closed gates of the entrance lay three dead men, their faces waxy pale and covered with flies. I could see no signs of life within and wandered round to the back of the building, when a few desultory shots fell from the northern part of the town. There was nothing of interest

going on, so I made for the hotel where the American minister was staying. General O'Brien was a genial, bearded giant with a very imposing appearance and a great simplicity of character. What he had done to become a general I never knew, but he was a thoroughly good fellow, fond of a glass and fond of a lass. He was the American representative for Paraguay and the neighbouring Republic of Uruguay, and had his residence in Monte Video, the capital of that country. He was now on one of his periodical visits to Asuncion. I walked into his sitting-room and found him seated in a rocking-chair with a worried look on his face, which he explained by saying that he had hoped to leave for Monte Video on the following day, but that now, in view of the political situation, he did not see much chance of doing so. He asked me whether I had any information and before I could reply clapped his hands for his black servant, who was in the adjoining room, and ordered cocktails. These appeared as if by magic—they must have been ready to hand—and, sipping mine, I detailed my experiences of the morning. I suggested that the only way to obtain authentic information was to go out into the streets and see what progress was being made either by the rebels or the Government troops. We accordingly set out, accompanied by the General's secretary, and outside the hotel found that a machine-gun had just been brought up by the loyal forces and was firing up the Calle Palmas, the principal street of the town. Several wounded men were to be seen, and an officer, who had an eye shot away, was still carrying on with his work. The Paraguayan is undoubtedly a brave fellow when in action, but most of them, not unnaturally, prefer getting out of the way when civil war is on foot. It was evident that the rebels had entered and were holding the northernmost part of the town, where the railway station, which was British property, was situated. The rebels were returning the fire with rifles and small artillery guns, and bullets were flying about pretty thickly. A rebel tramp steamer, armed with some sort of gun, was also bombarding the town, and generally the situation did not look any too happy. The President, moreover, we were told by an officer, had taken refuge in his palace, while the other ministers, it was thought, were hiding in the precincts of the railway station. We therefore returned to the hotel for lunch, and after deliberation the General, who was the doyen of the diplomatic corps, decided to summon that body for a conference at three in the afternoon. I myself undertook to carry the invitation to each diplomat, but I found that most of them were, not unnaturally, unwilling to leave the comparative security of their homes, and when the conference met the General

and myself and the Uruguayan representative were the only persons present. It was easy under these circumstances to come to an agreement, and we decided to ask for an officer with a flag of truce, with whom we were to proceed to the Palace in order to discuss the situation with the President of the Republic. The officer arrived shortly after with a large white banner, improvised from a bed-sheet, slung on a bamboo pole, and escorted by him we set forth on our errand. The streets through which we went were empty, and the fire seemed to have slackened down since the morning. Only here and there a bullet whistled by and flattened itself against some house or back wall. At the entrance to the Palace the three dead men I had observed in the morning were still lying covered with a cloud of flies. They were the only guardians of the gate, and we met nobody till we reached the interior of the building, where an officer came out and conducted us to the private apartments of the Chief of State. General Ferrera was then a man of about fifty years of age. He was of pure Spanish descent, and his face gave an impression of culture and of no small degree of intelligence. His hair was dark, but his close-trimmed beard was just turning grey. He received us with a quiet dignity which was impressive, and one would never have thought from his demeanour that the enemy was at his gates thirsting for his blood. General O'Brien had no great knowledge of the language, and, acting as spokesman, I informed the President of the situation. Parts of the town, I told him, were already in the hands of the rebels, and the situation for his Government seemed hopeless. Under these circumstances, speaking on behalf of my colleagues, I suggested that, in order to avoid further bloodshed, he should come to terms with the rebels while there was still time. I added that General O'Brien, the Uruguayan representative, and myself were prepared to render him any assistance which lay in our power. The President replied that it was impossible for him to take action without previous consultation with his Cabinet, and that, failing this, he would remain where he was and defend the Palace with a few of his adherents who still remained faithful. He added that of these there were about thirty in the Palace. After a short discussion we agreed to set out in search of the ministers, and to endeavour to bring them back with us. The President thanked us very courteously, and we started out again with the officer carrying the flag of truce. There was no cessation of activity on the part of the combatants as we issued from the Palace gates. The monitor anchored in the river was firing over the water as fast as its primitive armament would permit, and a troop of Red cavalry passed us at the trot, led by a dashing-

looking Gaucho chieftain, whom I recognized as my old acquaintance Don José. The Conservatives were massing their troops, and the reign of the Liberals seemed ended for the moment. We were making for the railway station, but progress was slow, as street barricades, over which we had to climb, blocked our way at every twenty or thirty yards. The firing was now pretty brisk, and on both sides the soldiers let fly at anything they saw moving, and unfortunately the movers were ourselves. Finally, we reached the station, where we were met by the manager, an Englishman, who informed us that the ministers had taken refuge in the building, which had suffered not a little from artillery and rifle fire. We requested him to bring them to us in his private office, and in a few moments the ministers appeared before us—five careworn and anxious-looking men who since early morning had faced the prospect of a violent death. We invited them to return with us to the Palace to confer with the President, and to this, after some demur, they consented. It was now about five in the afternoon, and it was necessary to make our return journey with all speed, in order that an armistice could be arranged before dark. We accordingly set off at once under the escort of the officer with the flag of truce, and proceeded by the same route by which we had come, for, as I pointed out to General O'Brien, here we knew what to expect, whereas in taking another line of march matters might certainly be better, but they might also be much worse. Subsequent events proved that I was quite right. As we left the railway station the firing slackened down for a bit, but it was renewed as we got farther on our way, and it was evident that our companions were not a little nervous as to the prospect of reaching the Palace without mishap. Our flag-bearer too seemed scarcely as alert in keeping ahead and covering us with his banner as we thought desirable, and on speaking to him somewhat sharply he told me that he had just received a bullet in the calf of the leg and the wound, as I saw when he drew my attention to it, was bleeding freely. However, we pressed on, and finally reached the Palace without further mishap. We then handed to the President his entire Cabinet safe and sound, and left them to their deliberations, which, as we learnt later, resulted in the resignation of the Government, and their replacement by the Conservatives or red handkerchief party. General O'Brien then walked up to the hotel, where he invited me to join him in a cocktail and after chatting with him over the events of the day I thought I would go and look up some friends at the other end of the town and see how they had fared. I decided that the safest way would be to follow the hills overlooking Asuncion, and then make a bee-line straight down to the house

of my friends, thus avoiding, as I thought, the possibility of meeting the troops in the streets. I found, however, on reaching the road which I sought that these hills were held by rebel soldiers, who were letting loose their ammunition as fast as they could fire. One man I saw take a pot-shot at me, and the bullet struck a brick wall just an inch above my head—much too close to be pleasant. I then bore down more or less in the direction of my friends' house, and as I turned the corner of a street I saw a patrol of soldiers kneeling down and on the point of firing a volley. There was no object in turning, so I went on, and when the discharge came the bullets whistled all round me, though fortunately I was unhurt. Just after this had happened a most attractive-looking lady, living in one of the houses nearby, who must have seen the occurrence, looked out from the iron lattice of her window for a moment as I passed and said, "*Que audaz !*" ("What an audacious fellow !"), a charming compliment which I have never forgotten. I found my friends safe and sound, took my dinner with them, and returned home after dark to my house. The town was then silent after the stirring events of the day, for the revolution was ended. There was only one European newspaper correspondent in Asuncion at the time, and, strangely enough, this was a representative of the well-known Swedish daily, "*The Svenska Dagblad*," who gave me an unduly flattering notice which I reproduce together with a letter from General O'Brien on his return to Monte Video.

LETTER FROM GENERAL O'BRIEN

July 14th, 1908.

AMERICAN LEGATION, MONTE VIDEO,
REPUBLIC OF URUGUAY.

MY DEAR GOSLING,

On my return here I want to thank you for co-operation in the recent events in Paraguay.

Your knowledge of political conditions proved of great value, and I shall not easily forget the courage which you displayed on so many occasions.

Cordially yours,
O'BRIEN,
American Minister.

EXTRACT FROM AN ARTICLE IN THE "*STOCKHOLM DAGBLAD*" FOR
AUGUST 12, 1908, ON THE REVOLUTION IN PARAGUAY

Translation :

. . . When the passing of every moment seemed to make the situation of the President more precarious, and his life seemed almost

hopelessly lost unless someone intervened, the gallant English Minister, Cecil Gosling, showed what a man of heart can do in the hour of danger. Together with the similarly undismayed American Minister, O'Brien, and a Uruguayan colleague, he endeavoured, at first by strategy, to gain entrance to the Palace, where the President was defended by a guard of forty men ; and when this attempt proved unsuccessful he requested of the revolutionists that he and his companions be permitted to arrange an arbitration between the opposing camps. This was granted, and accompanied by one soldier bearing a white flag they reached the Palace. The President had been there a day and a half, separated from his family and with nothing to eat. With his poncho, a sort of Spanish shawl, over his shoulders, his gun in his hands, he and the few friends who had dared to stand by him met the entering diplomats. The diplomats saw at once that they were in the presence of men who believed they were about to die, but who had resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible.

Greetings were exchanged and the President made friendly inquiries concerning their well-being, and conversed about the weather, etc.

Not even in this dangerous situation did the President's calm and pleasing manner forsake him, a manner which had always lent him his greatest charm and which served to disarm many of his worst enemies. The diplomats glanced at each other, uncertain how they should begin. Finally Minister O'Brien, as the oldest, began as spokesman :

" We have come here," he said, " on account of the painful situation in which you find yourself. Two hundred volunteers have gone over to the enemy, and this has hampered Garcia, who, fighting bravely with as many as would follow him, has sought a retreat in the English railway station. The warship ' Libertad ' has surrendered, and your remaining forces are demoralized. There is no longer any possibility of holding out before the revolutionists. The question is now essentially on what conditions you are willing to surrender the Palace and to resign from the Government."

" On no conditions," answered the President proudly. " I am decided to defend the Palace and my position to my last breath."

They had at once, on seeing him, expected this reply, and it was now necessary to present the case so tactfully that the President, out of love for his country and people, would resign. He listened attentively to their words, and finally requested that his ministers be brought to him in order that he might consider with them what the situation demanded.

And now again one saw Cecil Gosling's proud blond head uncovered in the rain of shot, and again could be heard his ringing voice, encouraging his companions to follow him, and calling on the revolutionists to respect the white flag. His inherited blood of Swedish military leaders seemed to thrill through his veins, and his large blue Fersen eyes compelled obedience. From the Palace to the infantry barracks, where he was to negotiate with the leader of the

revolutionists, thence to the railway station, whence he was to take the ministers, one followed his brave march with admiration. It was then necessary to convey the ministers to the Palace, but before they were ready to begin the dangerous advance the fire of guns had again commenced. The soldier who bore the flag of truce walked very slowly—as it proved later, on account of a bullet that had penetrated his leg—and held the flag in a most awkward manner, so that it did not present a good appearance, thus contributing to making the advance of the ministers more perilous. Bullets pattered about them, and moved by the sight of the dead and dying victims, some of the ministers were unable to proceed a step farther. They should all, without doubt, have been cut down if Gosling had not swiftly leaped upon the barricades before them. From these he was seen to wave his white straw hat in the air and command the others to follow him. Paraguayans know how to appreciate manliness and courage. They lowered their guns at once and permitted the diplomats and ministers to pass on unharmed.

The consultation of the President with his ministers resulted in his resigning from the Government on certain conditions, and he was escorted to his home by Major Jara.

The new Government was named at once, and manifests were distributed among the people. There are still disturbances in country towns and the evenings in the city are very unsafe. The rabble which usually follows an army is beginning to commit all sorts of atrocities, and the authorities urge the populace to appear on the streets as little as possible after seven o'clock. I cannot observe any great joy over the revolution, nor can I see any definite opposition to it. Every one speaks with respect of the new Government's membership, but awaits with prudent caution the advantages which the country is promised as a result of their deeds.

My last official act in Paraguay was to negotiate and sign an Extradition Treaty between Great Britain and that country, a piece of work which brought me into daily contact with the Foreign Minister of the day, an able politician with a thirst for the acquisition of general knowledge and, in particular, of the English language. On one occasion he embarrassed me considerably by asking apropos of one of the clauses in our treaty, what was the derivation of the word "kidnapping." I was regularly stumped and told him so, but on my return home, and referring to my dictionary, I found the root was German, namely *Kind*, and that thereafter "kid," for child, is not, as I and perhaps others thought, slang, but the very best of English—even though it be of German origin.

Some time previous to this the Foreign Office offered me the post of Consul-General at Warsaw, which I refused, as I preferred to complete my studies of South America. I was then offered

the post of Chargé d'Affaires and Consul at La Paz, the capital of Bolivia, which I accepted, and bidding good-bye to Paraguay, the Land of the Lotus Flower, where I had spent nine years, I took passage to Buenos Ayres and thence to Santiago, the Chilean capital.

CHAPTER XXII

ACROSS THE ANDES TO LIMA AND LA PAZ

FROM Buenos Ayres I travelled by rail to Mendoza and over the Andes to the Chilean capital. The journey is an interesting one, for the line traverses some of the richest and most fertile parts of the Argentine, and vast plains, of which some are alfalfa and others under the natural grasses, extend before the eyes of the traveller.

I travelled in a Pullman car, and seated at the opposite end of it was a well-dressed man of about fifty who kept on staring at me in what I was beginning to think was rather a rude way. Presently he rose and came towards me and, raising his hat, said in French, "Pray, excuse my addressing you, but I feel sure that you are some relation of my old friend Gyldenstolpe!" It was Count Prozor, the Russian Minister to Brazil, who must have had a peculiar facility for seeing likenesses, for his "old friend" was my uncle who had been dead for about twenty years.

In those days the Andean tunnel was not yet built, and travellers had to drive by diligence for some two hours to meet the Chilean train. These diligences were horsed with excellent Chilean ponies, regular little models standing fourteen hands and under, and, being harnessed six to each carriage, travelled at a rattling pace in the hands of their expert and somewhat reckless drivers. I enjoyed the cool, bracing air, and my first view of the Andes, but some of my fellow-travellers were too nervous to appreciate the scenery especially when, as often happened, we galloped at full pace downhill and turned a sharp corner with our near wheels well over the edge of a precipice showing an unfathomable drop below into eternity. However, we reached our journey's end in safety, and I arrived in Santiago dusty and tired, but with the pleasurable conviction that Chile was a country after my own heart.

At this time our minister in Santiago was Sir Henry Bax-Ironside, an able diplomat who had married a cousin of mine.

Calling on them on the morning after my arrival they very kindly invited me to spend a few days with them and see the sights of Santiago. While thus pleasantly engaged a telegram arrived from the Foreign Office, instructing me to remain where I was and to take charge of the Legation during the minister's

absence on leave. A few days later the Bax-Ironside sailed for England and I found myself His Majesty's representative to a country which, from the first, had impressed me so favourably, and I was not a little pleased at my good fortune.

The following year, which I spent at Santiago, was a pleasant one. My official duties were not onerous, being mainly of a routine nature, and I had sufficient time on my hands to cultivate Chilean society and to learn to know and to appreciate this distinguished and interesting people.

During my stay Baden Powell visited Chile for the purpose of lecturing on the boy scout movement, and he was given a most enthusiastic reception from all classes of the community. Military reviews were held in his honour, at which I was also present in my official capacity, and on these occasions we were both mounted on capital horses and subsequently wined, dined, and feasted to our hearts' content and to the limit of our endurance; for Chilean wine, though excellent, is strong, and it flows on these occasions literally like water, while the Chilean officers, like the stout and gallant fighting men they are, have a very remarkable capacity for stowing it away and keeping their heads and legs unimpaired the while.

At the time Baden Powell had not reached the position he holds to-day, and the boy scout movement was only in its infancy. During the days I spent in the company of the chief scout I became an enthusiastic admirer of his remarkable abilities and versatility, which must have commanded success in any career which he had chosen to adopt. He endeared himself to all classes in Chile, and his visit undoubtedly served to strengthen the bonds of friendship between this Republic and Great Britain.

A new minister, Sir Henry Lowther, had now been appointed to Chile, and had left London for his post, so the date of my own departure was close at hand.

Before leaving I had a farewell audience with the President of the Republic, who expressed his regret at my departure and said, "Mr. Gosling, I wish you that success in your career which you deserve."

I embarked on a steamer bound for Lima, and after stopping at the various ports *en route*, at each of which I received complimentary visits from the Chilean and Peruvian authorities, I duly arrived at the port of Callao, where I was met by an Admiralty launch, manned by bluejackets, to bring me ashore.

At all these Pacific ports the waters abound in sea-wolves, as the Spanish call them, large beasts with a fierce-looking face adorned with long bristling moustaches; they come out on the

top of a surf wave and peer down into the boat in a menacing way, though they are in reality perfectly harmless. Their skins are of value, but as the Peruvian Government has wisely granted to only one individual the permission to shoot them they are but little interfered with.

Callao is an interesting old Spanish port, and after a cup of coffee I amused myself by wandering about its narrow, winding streets until my train left for Lima, a run of about half an hour. On arrival I drove to the Legation, where our minister, Sir Charles des Graz, had invited me to partake of his hospitality.

Lima is the most Spanish-looking of all the South American cities, and the modern portion is gay with shops almost as good as those of London or Paris, and with corresponding prices. The old parts of the town round about the cathedral are picturesque, and every stone has its history. In the cathedral, an imposing building of the XVIth century, the bones of Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru, may be seen, while nearby is the spot where he was assassinated, a blind alley, narrow and gloomy, which ends abruptly in a courtyard. I should have liked to visit the adjacent houses, which are of the same period as the cathedral, for here Pizarro and many of his followers lived, but unfortunately this was not possible, and I had to content myself with peering into the courtyards and reconstructing in my mind scenes of those days when Spain was at the height of her power. History condemns her cruelty to the native races which she conquered, but whereas the descendants of these races survive to-day, mingled with the blood of their conquerors, the aborigines of North America and Australia are almost extinct. It is wise therefore to avoid any argument with a Spaniard on the matter.

After spending a few pleasant days at Lima I took train for Puno, a port on Lake Titicaca, and after ascending sixteen thousand feet I reached my destination without experiencing the dreadful mountain sickness. Other travellers were, however, less fortunate, and there were scenes in the carriage resembling a bad crossing on a channel boat. Even if one does not actually suffer from the malady one's sensations at these great altitudes are peculiar. There is some difficulty in breathing, the heart beats violently, and one's legs feel too light for one's body. The air is, however, very invigorating, like a sharp winter's day in Northern Europe, and the sky overhead is deep blue and the sun at midday burning hot. The high plateau of the Andes through which we had passed is a barren, monotonous land with a dominating colour note of a dirty yellow grey. It is sparsely

cultivated with crops of potatoes, barley, wheat, and a species of millet called *quinoa*. In the distance one sees the imposing snow-capped mountains of the Andes, whose fertile and well-watered valleys stand out green as emeralds amid the surrounding desolation. The plateau has no grass or trees, only stones and here and there branches of a hard, ugly-looking plant called *tola*, the roots of which are used as fuel by the inhabitants. The chief combustible is, however, llama dung, a valuable commodity which the Indians store up till they have sufficient to load up on their llamas and bring it into town to sell. *Taquia*, as it is called, after being exposed to the dry air of the plateau, burns well and resolves itself into a fine, dry, white ash, which retains great heat for some time. It gives off a strong-smelling smoke which, if the cook is careless, is apt to give the food an unpleasant taste. In the Peruvian highlands the Indians are mainly Quichuas, the race which served as slaves to the Incas during their domination prior to the conquest. They are not altogether an engaging-looking people, but are nevertheless more attractive than their rivals, the Aymará Indians, who inhabit a considerable part of the Bolivian plateau.

It was a bright, moonlight night when I embarked on the steamer which was to convey me across Lake Titicaca to Guaqui, the Bolivian port on the opposite side, but, tired as I was after my steep ascent in the train, I could not resist sitting up on deck and surveying the scene for an hour or so. The moon was casting its silver rays on the unfathomable depths of this great inland sea, whose waters sparkled and scintillated as if they would reflect the hidden treasure of gold said to lie concealed beneath its depths. Off the far coast-line lies an island—still held sacred by the Indians of to-day—which is supposed to be the birthplace of the Inca kings.

One wonders what would have been the future of South America had there been no invasion by the Spaniards and no consequent destruction of this empire.

Had this been the case, free to develop under its own civilization, South America would probably have been to-day a great empire, perhaps a rival to Japan, and peopled by a most interesting race of human beings; for the culture and civilization of the Incas and the populous races over which they ruled is attested to by many of the old Spanish chroniclers and in particular by Leguisamo, the last survivor of the *Conquistadores*, who allowed that it was not inferior to that of Spain itself. And again the late Sir Clement Markham, in "The Incas of Peru," referring to the execution by the Spaniards of their king, says, "Thus ended the famous dynasty of the Incas. It formed a line of wise and

capable sovereigns ruling a vast empire on such principles and with such capacity and wisdom as the world has never seen before or since." In the face of such testimony one is forced to the conviction that the Spanish conquest of Peru was one of the greatest crimes and calamities known to history. With these reflections, I descended to my cabin and turned in.

The breeze had freshened after leaving port, and a choppy sea on the great lake was affecting two of the passengers in the cabin next to mine in a disagreeable manner. I was fortunately spared this infliction, for sea-sickness at an altitude of fifteen thousand feet, and perhaps combined with mountain sickness, is something on which the thoughts barely dare to dwell. Indeed, I had been told in Lima that people sometimes died from its effects.

We arrived at the Bolivian port of Guaqui on the following morning at daybreak, and partaking of a cup of coffee I landed and, after satisfying the customs authorities, took my seat in the train in a carriage which had been reserved for me by the company. The country through which we passed was even more arid and desolate than the Peruvian highlands, and was covered as far as the eye could see with stones, through which, in a miraculous manner, sparse crops of potatoes, barley, oats, and *quinua* sprung up here and there. There is no land more dreary-looking than this Andean plateau, whose inhabitants are the Aymará Indians. They are a sullen, forbidding-looking race. The men carry a sling made of plaited llama wool, which is used mainly for defence, though sometimes also for directing the animals they are driving, such as llamas, donkeys, and pigs. They use this weapon with unerring skill, and a mob of Indians thus armed, and with a little fire-water to give them Dutch courage, have often proved more than a match for Government troops sent to subdue them. I once saw an Aymará Indian drop a pig, perhaps fifty or sixty feet away, stunned in his tracks with a well-directed stone.

The train stopped for a time at Tehuanaco, where a huge Inca monolith stands. The spot is believed by scientists to have been a vast burial-ground, and interesting relics are still to be dug out of the earth. The adjacent church of the XVIth century is almost entirely built of stones taken from the temple which once stood on this spot, and even the material for the bridges of the modern railway line is in many cases taken from these ruins.

Our engine, after pulling up the steep ascent, finally reached the Alto—the highest point—which was our destination. The view from here is magnificent ; facing one is the giant Ilimani

with its twenty-four thousand feet of rugged, snow-capped grandeur, and to the left is another mighty range, terminating with Mount Sorata. Ilimani, translated from the Aymará, means the Eternal One, and is well named. From the Alto one can see the red-tiled roofs of the houses of La Paz, which nestles in a hollow. The journey down this alarmingly steep descent is made by an electric tramway. It looks, and is in fact, as I was told by the engineer of the line, not a little dangerous. We arrived, however, without mishap, and driving to the one and only hotel of which La Paz boasts I went straight to bed, for the long journey, combined with the high altitude, had tired me. I cannot say that I passed a restful night, for whereas nature during the waking hours adapts one's breathing to the height, causing one to take double one's ordinary breaths, during sleep it omits this necessary precaution, with the result that one constantly awakes with an unpleasant choking sensation. This, however, gradually passes off as one becomes acclimatized. The altitude of La Paz is twelve thousand eight hundred feet, and as the city lies in a hollow surrounded by hills breathing is more difficult than at a greater height in an open country, where there is a better supply of oxygen.

The next morning I was up early and went to have a look at the town. The day was bright and clear with a snap of cold in it, which should have had an invigorating effect, but I found my legs curiously light and apparently incapable of sustaining my body, while, if I walked uphill for a few steps, my heart started to beat like a sledgehammer. These sensations, which were strikingly unpleasant, were of course due to the altitude and lack of oxygen, which is peculiar to La Paz. But the scene was a very picturesque one, and unlike anything I had ever seen before. The capital is built on the side of a hill, and descends to a valley through which runs a trickle of a river. The pavement is of good solid cobblestones, laid probably a century or more ago, and these have become as slippery as glass in the transit of time, and of many thousands of sandalled Indian feet passing over them. Walking in La Paz is therefore a matter of no little difficulty. The upper part of the town is the Old Quarter, and there one may see houses dating back to the XVIIth century, with the arms and quarterings of the former owners over the entrance, and often with richly carved wooden balconies overlooking the street. The inner courts or *patios* have a most attractive old-world appearance. At the farthest end of the town there are still the ruins of several watch-towers connected with an encircling wall, and it was here that in the XVIIth century the Aymará Indians besieged, and after a prolonged

resistance on the part of the inhabitants finally broke, through the defences and ravaged the capital, torturing and putting to death every Spaniard—man, woman, or child—on whom they could lay their hands. In more modern times the Aymará has shown that he still retains his ferocity, and not so many years ago, during a revolution, a party of Government troops having taken refuge in a church the building was fired by the Indians and every man perished in the flames. I have been told by the Bolivians that the Aymarás are sometimes cannibals, and I must confess that one is predisposed to believe almost anything bad of them, for they are a most evil-looking people, whose faces depict a mixture of cunning and brutality which is as striking as it is repellent.

The modern part of La Paz extends down to a valley of which the road is lined with lofty poplar-trees. This is the residential quarter, and though the villas are modern and rather tawdry affairs, the gardens in which they stand afford relief from the rather dull monotony of the *altipiano*. In the sheltered spots roses and dahlias grow freely and even luxuriously, and I have seen geraniums growing to an unusual height and planted as hedges.

In the streets of La Paz, of a morning, there is a constant stream of Indians of both sexes coming and going, with troops of llamas and donkeys bearing their produce. The llamas stalk majestically over the cobblestones and gaze with seeming contempt at the town-dwellers. If approached too closely they spit at one, and their saliva is said to leave a black mark on the skin. By an old Inca law, which is still observed, no Indian may take the road with llamas unless accompanied by his wife!

It was now seven years since I had been home to England, and as soon as various questions which I had pending with the Bolivian Government were settled, I had planned an extensive trip through the interior of the country as far as the Argentine frontier, thence into Chile, and so home. My work, which brought me into daily contact with the Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs and with the President of the Republic, was of such a nature as could not be quickly dealt with, and though I found these personages well-disposed and friendly it was fully six weeks before my labours were concluded.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of those days was a very agreeable and dignified man who claimed to be directly descended from Inca ancestry, and a good story was told of him. An English railway contractor who, as is sometimes the case with our countrymen abroad, was rough and uneducated, had an

interview with His Excellency concerning certain proposed railway extensions, and, not speaking Spanish, he was accompanied by his secretary, who acted as interpreter. In the discussion which ensued the representative of the Bolivian Government found it necessary to take strong exception to the terms proposed by the contractor, who, losing his temper, turned to his secretary and exclaimed, "Tell the damned nigger that he can take my offer or leave it as suits him best!" "Sir," said the minister, speaking for the first time in very excellent English and looking calmly at the irate railwayman, "when *your* ancestors were apes, *mine* were princes."

It was a happy morning when I awoke with the thought that I was free to leave La Paz and start my travels again, for I had been working strenuously and my health had been far from good owing to the effects of the high altitude. The first stage of my journey, which I made by train, was to the town of Oruro. I was met on arrival by Dr. Smith, our Consul, who very amiably invited me to stay at his comfortable and well-ordered house. After an excellent dinner, Mr. Grey, the manager of an important tin mine, called and most kindly volunteered to lend me the mules required for my journey, an offer which I very gladly accepted. The altitude of Oruro is slightly less than that of La Paz, but the uncomfortable oppression and difficulty in breathing still affected me, so I took the next two days easily, loafing about the house and reading. The rest did me good, and after a while I felt able to accept an invitation to visit the Huanuni Tin Mines, which are among the richest in the world. Accompanied by a member of the staff, a Mr. Bruce, we set off one bright cold morning in a comfortable carriage drawn by four good mules, which rattled along at a smart pace. The air on the Oruro plateau is extraordinarily clear, and mirages are frequently to be seen. Lakes with limpid water, where no water is, appear on the horizon, and giant figures of Indians and llamas reaching up towards the heavens grip the imagination, so strange and supernatural do they appear. It is like a scene from the "Arabian Nights" and as if one were transported to the land of genii and sorcerers.

My companion pointed out a spot on the road—a deep gully—where a year ago an attempt had been made by four American "bad men" to hold him up in the very carriage in which we were travelling. They must, he said, have got wind of the fact that he was carrying money to pay the monthly wages of the staff at Huanuni, and as he drove through the gully some mounted men, all masked, suddenly appeared, revolvers in hand, and their leader commanded him to halt and hand over the cash. The

Indian driver had, however, the grit to give his horses the whip, and drove on amid a regular fusillade of shots, one of which lodged in my companion's arm and another in one of the leading mules. They held on, however, and were just able to reach the headquarters of the mine when the wounded mule fell dead in her traces. Pursuit was hastily organized, and a patrol of mounted men galloped after the outlaws and, getting on their tracks, succeeded in killing one of them. The leaders, two men named Brown and Maxwell, however got away as far as the Argentine frontier, where they were attacked by the soldiery, and Brown being severely wounded, Maxwell shot his companion dead and then, with grim determination, put a bullet through his own head. This was the story with which my companion beguiled the journey, and he pointed out to me several bullet-holes in the carriage as proof of the severity of the affray. On my subsequent journey I heard that Maxwell and Brown had been the authors of a number of murders and robberies in the Argentine as well as in Bolivia. A woman was said to have been with them when their crimes were committed, but she disappeared and was never caught.

During the Boer war a price was set on the head of an American who had murdered a number of British soldiers. These crimes were committed by a man wearing the uniform of a British officer, who would ride up to one of the camps and ask for hospitality. Invited, as a matter of course, to join the mess, he was no sooner seated than he would draw a revolver with each hand, shoot the two unsuspecting men nearest to him, and then, making a rush for the door, mount his horse and gallop away. A reward of a thousand pounds was offered for the capture of the bandit, dead or alive, but he was never taken, and must have succeeded in escaping from the country and making his way to South America, for a friend of mine, who had served through the South African campaign, and had seen the murderer, recognized him in Maxwell.

These outlaws were past-masters in the art of revolver-shooting, and some years later I met a man—a Bolivian—who had also been held up by them. He said that after tying up the occupants of the diligence, they offered to show them a little fancy revolver-shooting, and that each man then pricked his initials on a tree which stood some thirty or forty yards away. So my travelling companion, Mr. Bruce, had had a lucky escape, and I, for my part, was glad to know that these "bad men" were safely in their graves and no longer at large to molest travellers on their journey.

It was a delight to me to notice the variety of bird-life on the

plateau, pigeons, and golden spur-winged plover being numerous. We halted at an Indian village called Zorozoro, where we lunched and afterwards took a walk to look at the Indian burial-huts, each of which has a little window facing east to allow exit to the spirit. It was another two miles drive to the mine, which we visited on arrival, and did so much climbing at an altitude of about fourteen thousand feet that I was very tired when we returned and went straight to bed after dinner. On the following day I again visited the mine, and after lunch we started back for Oruro, picking up at Zorozoro the five mules which were to accompany me on my journey. They proved to be a useful-looking lot of animals.

The 24th of October, 1909, was a red-letter day for me, for on that morning the mules were brought at 6 a.m. into Dr. Smith's courtyard, saddled and ready for the journey. The mule which had been selected for my own riding was a good-looking brown animal, and her owner had assured me that her paces and endurance were all that could be wished for. She had, however, a great dislike to being saddled, and reared and bucked in a somewhat alarming fashion while this was being done. Once mounted, however, she was quiet and seemed as good as her owner described her to be.

I must now take leave to introduce my two companions. The first, my Paraguayan servant, who had been with me now for a number of years, was a man of about thirty, short and thick-set, of very powerful physique and with an open, good-humoured face. He was by profession a *domador*, or horse-breaker, and a first-class man at his business, with the lightest of hands and a graceful but strong seat in the saddle. His nickname was "Carapé," meaning the dwarf, an illusion to his diminutive stature, and it was the only name I knew him by. He was a native of Paraguay, where his countrymen are very apt in bestowing nicknames on all and sundry. Even foreigners do not escape, though fortunately for them they often do not know their native designation, which is seldom flattering. I have known a heavy-footed, unintelligent German whom they called "Mborevi," meaning the tapir, the clumsiest and stupidest animal of the South American jungle. My own nickname was "Mbaracadja pytá," which is a wild-cat, red in colour and very savage. A short temper and a reddish moustache no doubt suggested the analogy.

My servant, Carapé, was a splendid fellow, able to cook a dinner and also to catch it with his ever-ready lasso—though the hand that wielded it did not, I fear, always have that strict regard for the laws of property which is desirable. He could

ride, shoot, swim, and, if necessary, fight in his master's defence, and was, in fact, a very jewel of a man.

My other companion, the mule driver, was a half-caste of the Puno, sullen but cunning-looking, as are all his race. His name was Julian, and I shall have more to say of him in the course of this narrative.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE HIGHLANDS OF BOLIVIA

NEVER before, I think, have I been so glad to get away from town-life to the glorious freedom of the pampa and the forest and to leave behind the desolation of the Andean plateau, with its sullen and forbidding Indian inhabitants. The mules trotted out smartly, the bells of those carrying the pack tinkled merrily, and after travelling over a bare plain for some hours we halted at the railway head at a spot called Fraser's Camp, thus named after the engineer in charge of the construction of the line. Here we breakfasted off a beefsteak, grilled over llama dung, and gave our mules a good feed of barley in the ear; saddling up again, we ascended some two thousand feet, amid a rugged and desolate scenery. The altitude was about fourteen thousand feet, and I felt that unpleasant difficulty in breathing peculiar to these regions. But it was the last of these experiences, for we now commenced to descend, and the relief at feeling that we were leaving the inhospitable Puno behind was almost indescribable. For several hours our road lay through a deep gorge with high perpendicular rocks on each side, and it was not till well after sunset that we reached a miserable Indian village called Ventillo, where we intended to sleep. Here a *fiesta* of some kind was in full swing, and all the inhabitants were strongly under the influence of *chicha* and fire-water, and the chances of obtaining accommodation and food seemed none too good.

The *Corregidor*, or headman, was the owner of the miserable inn, and after waiting for an hour, I saw that he intended to do nothing for us, so I read out to him a recommendation from the President of the Republic, in which officials were instructed to give me every assistance on my journey. This, in his drunken condition, produced no effect on the *Corregidor*, whereupon I lost my temper and spoke to him in a menacing manner, which indicated a resource to personal violence if my just demands were not met. In other parts of South America courtesy and fine manners are travellers' best passports, but in the highlands of Bolivia things are otherwise, and it is only by bullying that one can get food and lodging even at extortionate prices. But my wrath bore fruit, and muttering that "things did not go by electricity in Ventillo"—he seemed highly proud of this expression—the *Corregidor* became humble and served us with some indifferent mutton broth and some barley for the mules. I

awoke my servant at 5 a.m., and after a cup of coffee we again took the road, amid cold, gloomy mountain scenery until, coming suddenly round a bend, we passed close to an apple-tree in the full glory of its blossom. This beautiful sight moved me in a manner that could only be understood by one who has lived for some time in the desolate plains. I raised my hat with reverence, and Carapé, divining my thoughts, said, "We are coming into God's land again." The country now became fertile, and was well watered by a narrow mountain stream which bore the incongruous name "Rio Grande." It wound in and out in a most annoying fashion, and we must have splashed through it half a dozen times, getting our feet wet and cold. From a high cliff above a number of llamas looked down on us, and I was glad to wave them what I hoped was an eternal farewell. The sun now began to be really warm, and passing through a pretty village, where some magnificent hollyhocks grew luxuriantly, I saw two little girls bathing in the shallow waters of the Rio Grande. Here the mail-coach, with twelve mules harnessed to it, galloped by with a clatter and a cracking of whips which nearly proved too much for the nerves of our own animals. Shortly after we passed a troop of horses, each of which I eyed closely, as I wanted to buy a nag for a change from the mule, whose long nodding ears become so wearisome to the horseman after a while. But my eyes fell on nothing that I fancied.

Nature was becoming more and more prodigal as we descended the valley, and the road was fringed with a species of acacia-tree, bearing blue, scented flowers which the Bolivians call *aromita*,—a pretty fancy, an affectionate diminutive of our own word fragrance. The muleteer's sullen features betrayed no appreciation of these delights, but Carapé and I rode along, sniffing the scented air and revelling in these beauties of nature of which we had for so long been deprived. Descending rapidly for some two thousand feet, we reached Arque, a pretty little shaded village. We stopped for lunch and bait at a wayside hut, where we found the owner's wife very ill with pneumonia. Her husband took me in to see her, but she was barely conscious, and I was able to offer but little advice. Her two small daughters cooked us some excellent soup and fried eggs, and after the meal I walked with my host round the village, which, he informed me, had been flooded some forty years ago and a number of villagers drowned. I expressed surprise and said that I should never have believed the the trickling Rio Grande capable of such a thing. Nevertheless, he replied, there were times when it could be very *bravo* (angry). On our return we paid the sick woman another visit, and attempted to cheer her up. A long and very

hot ride through a fertile country with alfalfa growing abundantly brought us to a good-sized village, which proved to be Capinota. A very pretty young woman was seated at the porch of what proved to be the inn, and on inquiring if we could pass the night there she signified her assent in the soft accents which I took to be those of Southern Spain. She proved, however, to be a native of Santa Cruz, and was much interested to learn that we were ourselves bound for that distant city. Presently her husband, a good-looking, bearded Chilean, with a gun over his shoulder and carrying a couple of wild pigeons which he had shot strolled in. After a good meal and a bottle of home-made wine I retired to a comfortable bed, and lay awake listening to the varied croaking of the frogs in a pond nearby. There were at least a dozen different voices among them, some comical, while others had a melancholy and not unmelodious note. One sort whistled loud and clear, so that you would have sworn it was a boy, while another went "pop-pop-pop," exactly like a champagne cork being drawn. I was up at six in the morning, and found that our silly mules, accustomed to the dry, hard barley-stalks of the highlands, had refused to touch the succulent green alfalfa which had been given them overnight. They would learn better before the journey was ended. We saddled up and rode through the village, which was ablaze with roses, while the road itself was lined with fig-trees heavy with their luscious purple fruit. It was veritably a land of plenty in this rich valley. Crossing the Rio Grande, which had now become broader and deeper, the road ran through a deep gorge with red, precipitous rocks on either side. These were plastered to a considerable height with coca leaves, for the Indian when he passes any place which he deems dangerous and where he fears that evil spirits may lurk takes the chewed cud of coca from his mouth and scatters it with his hand on some conspicuous place, as a peace-offering. The coca plant, from which the famous drug cocaine is manufactured in Europe, is an insignificant-looking shrub, growing about a foot in height, and is largely cultivated in the valleys descending from the high Andean plateaux. Coca occupies the first place of importance in the lives of the Aymará and Quichua Indians, who attach to it a value greater than to spirits or tobacco, or perhaps even food. Its use is, however, confined to the Indians of the highlands, though the plant itself only flourishes in the lower altitudes. The method of preparation is simple: the leaves are dried in the shade, and are then fit for use. Every highland Indian carries a small knitted bag attached to his girdle containing a supply of coca leaves, and when at work or on the march he at intervals fills his mouth with a handful,

which he chews in the same manner that a sailor chews his quid of tobacco. The effect is said to be wonderfully invigorating and enables the Indian to perform extraordinary feats of endurance. The traveller in the Bolivian highlands may, to his misfortune, at times find himself obliged to hire mules from the owner of a wayside inn, or *posta*, as it is called in Spanish. With the mules, which are usually a very scraggy and half-starved lot, goes an Indian runner on foot, whose duty it is to accompany the animals to the next *posta* on the road, and to return with them. The Indian runners are usually spare, slim men, having the appearance of highly trained athletes, and their powerful chests—induced by deep breathing in high altitudes—are very noticeable. While travelling thus with mules, which they never think of riding, for neither the Aymará nor the Quichuas are horsemen, they will in a day cover distances from forty to fifty miles on mountainous roads without touching food and relying entirely on the virtue of coca leaves to sustain their strength. On my journeys in the Bolivian highlands I often chewed coca myself as an experiment when tired or hungry, but I never discovered that it had any effect on me, good or otherwise. The taste of the leaves is slightly bitter, but in no way disagreeable. If you want to find a way to the heart of the Puno Indian, if you want shelter, food for yourself and animals, give him a handful of this precious leaf and his sullen face will lighten, his eyes glisten, and he will let you buy what he has to sell—at a price. If you do not thus placate him, the chances are that the traveller and his beast will go hungry till morning.

At midday we reached the village of Caraza, where the inn was kept by a garrulous old man, a widower with two pretty daughters, who were very anxious to ascertain who I was, whither bound, and with what object. Presently I learnt the reason of their curiosity. A circus was expected to arrive shortly in Cochabamba, and they took me and my followers for its advance-guard. Their father showed me a deep pool in the river, where I had a refreshing bath before sitting down to a simple meal of fried eggs and some excellent white bread. While bathing, I ran a thorn deep into my heel, which Carapé extracted after much difficulty and labour. There was a guitar hanging on the wall of the eating-room, and I amused the old man and his daughters by playing and singing to them for half an hour.

The road from Caraza onward lay over a flat plain on which the sun beat fiercely, causing Julian, our mule driver, who had never before left his native highlands, to grumble and sulk. It was clear that he would give trouble later on when we got into

really warm and tropical latitudes, but I thought it better for the moment to take no notice of his ill-humour. We passed several long trains of mules caparisoned in the Spanish style with red tassels and ornamented head-gear. They were laden with rubber from the Beni River, and had travelled for many hundreds of miles from that far-away and little-known land, which it was also my fortune to visit some years later. It was sunset when our mules clattered over the rough cobbles with which Cochabamba is paved, and our arrival caused quite a stir among the population, which was enjoying a quiet stroll in the cool of the evening. I put up at the principal hotel, and sent the still sulky Julian to a *tambo* with the mules, Carapé remaining with me. After a fair dinner and a bottle of wine, the aide-de-camp of the Prefect called and entertained me with wondrous tales of gold and silver mines in the neighbourhood. On the following day I visited the Prefect in his imposing palace, and afterwards took a walk round the town, visiting the market, which was a blaze of flowers of all varieties. Cochabamba is a city of churches, and after a while I lost count of them. I visited the two principal ones, the Cathedral and the Compañía, in both of which the interiors and altars were decorated in a rich and very striking manner. In the former, at one of the smaller altars, I noticed two exquisite Louis XV solid silver tables, which must have been worth a considerable sum. In both churches there were a number of pictures dating from the sixteenth century, and perhaps even earlier. In the *plaza*, or principal square, there is a fine stone monument, surmounted by a condor, the national emblem, which commemorates the names of the first leaders of the Revolution against Spain, who suffered the death penalty. Previous to the War of Independence the town was called Oropesa by the Spaniards, and only reverted to its original Indian title after the Spanish dominion was overthrown.

In the afternoon I was taken for a drive by a Swiss resident. The Alameda, the principal promenade, is shaded by magnificent weeping willows, and the villas, with luxuriant gardens on either side, are strikingly beautiful. We called on a lady living in one of the most attractive of these, and were given a cold and refreshing drink of lemonade. Her garden was a real delight—a mass of roses of all varieties, colours, and scents. My appreciation evidently gave her pleasure, for, as she told me, being a widow and childless, the culture of her flowers was really her chief pleasure. I thought, but did not say, that no great labour was needed in her garden, for in this fertile land the roses grew of themselves, without the need of tending or pruning. They were, however, none the less beautiful for that. In the evening I

visited another family where I was entertained with music and sweet champagne until nearly midnight, and then went on to the German Club, where I was forced to drink several *Schoppen* with its hospitable and friendly members. At that time, which was several years before the war, German commerce had penetrated to the remotest villages of South America, and wherever half a dozen Germans had settled they had their club, their musical society, and, in cases of large colonies, their church and German school. Strangely enough, though so tenacious in observing the habits and customs of their Fatherland, they were far less tenacious of their nationality than the British settlers, and I usually found that the first generation of Germans born in South America had become by inclination and sympathy citizens of the land of their birth.

The beer with which I was entertained at the club was most excellent, and I learnt that the brewery, which was, of course, in German hands, paid a dividend of a hundred per cent. Here, then was a real El Dorado, safer and surer as a wealth-getter than the gold and silver mines of my friend the aide-de-camp of the Prefect. There are many stories told in Cochabamba of the finding of portions of the buried treasure of the Incas, many of them, I suspect, apocryphal. I was introduced, however, to a wealthy Bolivian who had travelled the world, and who, I was told afterwards, had some years previously been a poor man eking out a scanty livelihood on a small holding in the vicinity of the town. My informant said that he had found treasure on his land, and, becoming wealthy, now owned vast tracts of the surrounding country. On the somewhat rare occasions when people find treasure they keep the secret very much to themselves, for otherwise the Government would step in and claim half the proceeds, so that, if this story is true, my acquaintance must have melted down his find and disposed of it bit by bit. Perhaps the treasure trove was in gold pieces of eight, or he may have lit on that identical gold image of the sun which was gambled away, and never heard of since, by Leguisamo, the last of the conquerors.

There are some delightful baths near Cochabamba at a spot called Calacala, where the water bubbles up from the earth. I went there every morning after my early cup of coffee, and enjoyed the walk through the pleasant lanes and a cool swim in the crystalline waters, which are said to have medicinal properties. They certainly gave me a wonderful appetite for lunch on my return. I also one morning visited the prison, and distributed cigarettes to the inmates, who were criminals of every kind and condition. One, who was under a long sentence for

murder, received me with great dignity and courtliness in his private room, and we had a long talk about the affairs of the outer world from which he was thus unfortunately shut off. He was a native of Peru, and having been attached for several years to the Peruvian Legation in Paris spoke excellent French. I learnt after that he had stabbed his mistress in a fit of jealousy: "For each man kills the thing he loves."

Some criminologists say that murderers are normal, but for a small kink in their brain which impels them to crime.

I was once on terms of friendship with a man who seemed to be gifted with the happiest nature possible. Bright and gay, he was a sportsman of the right sort and an ardent lover of nature. He possessed also physical courage of the highest order. Yet some little time before his death he confessed to me that, having once had an apparently trivial quarrel with a man over some business, he had attempted to poison him with a cup of tea in which he had placed a fatal dose of arsenic. He said that he felt himself absolutely impelled to kill this man, that he watched him drink his tea with satisfaction, and that it was only when his enemy had finished the cup and his death appeared inevitable that he regretted what he had done. But, strangely enough, the man did not die, and, after chatting for a while with his would-be murderer, he got up and went home, none the worse for imbibing what was apparently a fatal dose of arsenic.

I refused to allow myself to believe this story, and was convinced that the man who related it to me was suffering from the effects of drink or a touch of the sun. Nevertheless, its accuracy was later corroborated in a very strange manner.

After my friend's death a sale of his effects took place, and these were bought by a mutual acquaintance who, on looking over his purchase, found amongst other things a phial marked "Arsenic," which was half full. Wishing a few days later to poison a dog which had been killing his fowls he smeared a quantity of the powder on to a piece of raw meat and placed it near the hen-coop. At nightfall he watched the dog approach the hen-roost, and, after nosing about for a bit, find and swallow the poisoned meat. So its owner went to bed happy in the belief that the chicken robber had met his doom. To his intense surprise, however, on the following morning the dog was found to be perfectly well, having suffered no ill-effects after swallowing enough arsenic to poison half a dozen of his kind.

What is the explanation? It is, I think, that the chemist who had received the order had, either in the interest of public security or, as is more likely, for purposes of gain, filled the phial with a perfectly harmless powder and labelled it arsenic.

Before concluding this chapter I must give some account of one of Cochabamba's claims to fame in the eyes of a good many inhabitants of the Republic. If you meet a Bolivian of the highlands who is travelling to this pleasant city he will not, as a rule, tell you that he is visiting Cochabamba to enjoy the mildness of its climate, the beauty of its scenery, its flowers, or even the charm of its women. No, he will, in all probability, say, "*Voya Cochabamba para tomar chicha*" ("I am going to Cochabamba to drink *chicha*").

Chicha is one of the oldest fermented drinks—older probably than mead, the drink of our Saxon and Viking ancestors. It was in use in Incaic and probably pre-Incaic times, and still to-day the inhabitants of Peru and Bolivia, from the educated classes to the wild nomad tribes of the interior, prepare and drink *chicha*. It is, in fact, the national beverage.

The preparation of *chicha* is a sight which is known to every traveller in these lands. A row of old women, seated before a large tub and all masticating as fast as they can a mouthful of maize which, when reduced to a pulp, they spit into the tub. When this receptacle is about a quarter full, water is added and the mixture then left in the sun until it ferments. The process does not, I confess, sound attractive, and I never could understand why it should always be carried out by old and sometimes toothless women, instead of by young and charming virgins. But such is the custom. While in La Paz I had sternly refused to taste the national beverage, and on the road, though I had been thirsty once or twice after coming into the warm, sheltered valleys, I still refrained. In Cochabamba, however, I fell to temptation and curiosity and, I must acknowledge, found *chicha* a most palatable drink, tasting very like cider, only better. It is very potent, and one bottle was about my limit. Bolivians drink many at a sitting, but after this they are quite frankly extremely drunk. So much then for the national beverage!

CHAPTER XXIV

A FAIR SPANISH LOYALIST

DURING the days I had spent in Cochabamba I had devoted no little energy to finding a horse, but without result. On the eve of my departure, however, at ten in the evening, a very shabby-looking individual appeared at the hotel leading an animal which he offered for sale. It was a bay pony aged eight, standing 14.3 hands, a good hard colour, and with a flowing mane and tail. I tried him over the cobblestones of the *plaza*, which was lit by electricity, and could find nothing wrong with him, though, of course, I suspected a catch. Then I made the owner ride him, and he seemed to me a good-looking, plucky little animal, and, in fact, just what I was looking for. Still, I knew that something *must* be wrong. Finally, after much bargaining and cigarette smoking with the disreputable owner, I bought him for thirty pounds.

At sunrise on the following day Julian appeared with the mules, which were looking fat and well after their rest. Carapé saddled me my new purchase, and once more we took the road, arriving at the village of Oran at about five in the afternoon. Here we obtained good fodder for our animals, and a plate of *picante*, or hot pepper stew, for ourselves. After the meal a man who had been eyeing my horse in the corral with some curiosity came up to me and said he knew the bay, that he was a good goer, but of a most quarrelsome disposition, and would kick down any stable he was put into. He added what I had already suspected, that the animal was a *rig*—my horsey readers will understand the meaning of this term. On the whole, the information given by this man was not unsatisfactory, for the horse was, as I had thought, a good travelling animal and would, no doubt, forget his quarrelsome habits under the influence of work. Moreover, as on this trip he would spend his nights of rest under the stars, his destructive habits in the stable need not be considered as a drawback.

On the following day, after an uninteresting ride, we halted for our midday meal at Vacas, a most desolate-looking hamlet. A woman had just died in the house next to the inn, and a wake was being held. Three drunken Indians with a couple of flutes and a drum made a most hideous noise, while the population of Vacas, consisting of perhaps a hundred souls, all of whom were drunk, shrieked at the top of their voices in a maddening way.

It was like Bedlam let loose, and I was glad after a short rest to go on our way. Vacas must have been an unhealthy place, for shortly after leaving we met a corpse slung on two poles, which was being carried by four Indians, who were also drunk. After a long climb up and over a mountain we reached a pleasant, sheltered valley through which we travelled till we arrived at the village of Pocona, which was our halting-place for the night. Like our last halting-place, Pocona was also full of drunken Indians, and one was lying on the mud bed in the single room of which the *posta* boasted. I drove him somewhat abruptly away, and as there seemed no prospect of getting food for man or beast, I gave an old woman a bribe of a dollar to go and forage for some eatables. She was already as drunk as David's sow, but returned in an hour's time, still more drunk, minus the dollar and having achieved nothing. Then, after removing her boots with some difficulty, she also laid down on what was to be my bed. I removed her and deposited her in a corner of the room, where she soon collapsed in a drunken stupor. Sleep for me was, however, impossible, for the Indians outside were making a noise to wake the dead, and as their attitude became somewhat threatening I opened the door and faced them, revolver in hand. After this they became quieter, and looking out again half an hour later I saw that, overcome by the alcohol they had consumed, they had fallen down in the street and were fast asleep. It was perhaps just as well, for Indians when excited by alcohol can be dangerous folk, and would think nothing of killing a stray foreigner who happened to be in their way. In South America a revolver is sometimes called *cinco amigos* (five friends), in allusion to the five bullets it carries, and it is not a bad name. Mine had, no doubt, carried me through many a tight place in my travels, and more often than I myself knew of, for if a man is known to go "heeled," as the Americans call it, evildoers will think twice before attacking him. But there is one golden rule which the traveller must bear in mind. Never *draw* your revolver unless you have quite made up your mind and you are prepared to *use* it if necessary. Otherwise, while you are fumbling with the weapon, you may stand a good chance of the other fellow getting in the first blow and killing you.

At dawn we made a fire and boiled some water for a cup of tea, and then set forth, picking our way among the still sleeping forms of the Indians, and after a climb of about three hours reached an altitude which commanded a magnificent view of the Cordillera. The sun was just rising and lit up the mountains with wonderful effects of colour, ranging from a deep purple to opal and a rosy pink, like the inside of a flamingo's wing. After

a long, thirsty five miles we reached Totorá, a good-sized town where I was well received by the Sub-Prefect, who gave us an excellent breakfast and a good supply of forage for our animals. I afterwards went to a sort of musical entertainment, at which I sang, accompanying myself on the guitar. I found that Totorá claimed a rivalry with Cochabamba in the production of *chicha*, and most of my audience were decidedly under the influence of this potent beverage.

On the next morning I had a curious experience at a village called Duraznillo, which in Spanish means "a small peach." Almost at the entrance of the village was a large house and garden surrounded by a high wall. As is the custom in these lands, we rode into the porch and asked if we might purchase fodder for our mules, food for ourselves, and permission to rest over the midday heat. Permission was readily given by a man who appeared to be employed on the property. In a short time a very excellent meal was served to me in a room apart from the main building, which, as travellers in South America are almost invariably bidden to the family table, surprised me not a little. When I had finished my lunch and was sipping a cup of coffee, I asked the girl who was waiting on me if I might not go and pay my respects to the family. She replied that her *patron* was coming to greet me as soon as he had finished dining. A few minutes later the master of the house appeared, and having saluted me gravely, seated himself at the table. He was a little old man, dressed in a shabby frock-coat, which was green with age. There was, nevertheless, an air of dignity about him and something in his appearance and bearing which differed from the class of people one might expect to meet in such a place. We exchanged courtesies, and when we had lit our cigarettes I asked him some casual questions about the road which lay before me. I found, however, that he could give me but little information, for he confessed that he seldom went beyond the confines of his property, and had but little intercourse with the outer world. After some moments of desultory conversation the old gentleman said, "Sir, I hear by your accent that you are not of this country; may I ask if perchance you come from Andalusia or some other province of Spain?" I then told him who I was and the object of my journey, upon hearing which he asked me to accompany him to the reception-room to be presented to his family. Following my host across two courtyards, he ushered me into a large and handsomely furnished room, where an old lady dressed in black was seated in an arm-chair, engaged in needlework. A second lady, aged about thirty, was reading what appeared to be a missal or book of hours, while in the

corner of the room a young and extremely beautiful girl of perhaps seventeen years of age was playing with a green parakeet. I was introduced by my host in turn to the three ladies, who bowed stiffly, and sat down feeling rather mystified and somewhat uncomfortable, for their reception of me, though not unfriendly, was odd and in some ways different from what one would expect from native Bolivians. It seemed to me, too, that in introducing me to the elder lady, who was presumably the old gentleman's wife and mother of the two girls, I had caught the word *marquesa*. But Spanish was clearly their language, so that they could not be foreigners, and titles in Bolivia had been abolished for over a hundred years since the proclamation of the Republic. Direct questions are not good manners when one meets strangers, and they are less admissible in the Castilian than, perhaps, in any other tongue. So I tried to satisfy my curiosity by other means. "I suppose," I said tentatively to the old lady, "you and your daughters have many friends in Cochabamba." "No, señor," she replied, "we have but few friends either in that town or in this district, for my husband, the *marqués*, is averse to frequenting the society of the Republicans." So the old man did call himself a *marqués*, and must therefore, I thought, be a native of Spain. I expressed as much to the old lady, who added quickly: "No, sir, Your Grace is quite mistaken; my husband's grandfather was born in this country when it was part of Spain's dominions, but neither he nor his father before him have ever acknowledged or recognized the Republic; and that is why," she added somewhat sadly, "we see so little of the outer world." Here, indeed, was a strange thing. This family had for three generations been bred and born in a country which had thrown off the Spanish yoke over a hundred years before, and they refused to acknowledge this fact, and lived in a world which was dead and gone. "Yes," said the old lady, "we are subjects of His Majesty King Alfonso XIII, may God guard him!" After this the ice was broken, and we spoke of Spain and of the King, whom I had often seen as a small child when we lived at Madrid.

I noticed a carefully-tended flower-garden from the windows of the room where we were sitting, and asked leave, which was readily granted, to visit it. The pretty daughter, whose name was Ines, accompanied me, and together we wandered among an enchanting confusion of roses and jasmine, which, as she told me, she tended and watered herself. When I complimented her on the result, she said that the flowers were the daily companions of her life. I asked her whether other passing travellers, like myself, did not help to enliven her solitude, and she replied "Not often," but that about two years ago Prince Louis of

Orléans and Braganza, with a companion, had halted here on his way to Santa Cruz, and had spent the night under their roof. I had myself met the Prince in Paraguay, previous to his journey to Bolivia, and there was some talk at the time of his making an effort to recover the throne of Brazil, to which he was heir. The Brazilian Government, however, forbade his landing on their territory, so the Prince, who was of a gallant and adventurous disposition, undertook this roundabout journey through Santa Cruz and finally reached the remote Brazilian province of Matto Grosso, thus circumventing the republican authorities. I heard that he was given a favourable reception by the troops, but nothing came of his attempts to recover his throne.

When we returned to the house I found Carapé and Julian with the animals saddled in readiness, and bidding good-bye to my host and hostesses I mounted my horse and set off down a steep, narrow path. After riding thus for almost an hour we reached the dried-up bed of a river, and, turning round for a last look at the house of the Spanish loyalist and his family, I saw the flutter of a handkerchief from the balcony. At the moment of my departure, I had persuaded the pretty daughter of the *marqués* to accept a book of Spanish verse which I carried in my saddle-bag, and this was her farewell greeting.

After a hot, disagreeable ride along the stony bed of the river we reached a small hamlet bearing the curious name of Viña Perdida (the lost vine), and here, as there was no available lodging, we camped out under the stars, and, Carapé having succeeded in buying a young sheep, which he roasted whole, we made an excellent and ample supper. Freshly killed meat is almost uneatable when served up under civilized conditions, but if skilfully roasted over a camp fire, and with a traveller's appetite for sauce, there are few better dishes. The method is as follows : after killing, skinning, and halving the sheep, the flesh is lightly rubbed over with salt and then with a red pepper, which has been toasted in the embers to remove the sting. A sharp stick is then passed through the meat and stuck in the ground, close to, but to leeward of, the fire, so that it may not get a smoky taste. When the first half is being eaten the second is put to roast, and it is astonishing how quickly a small mountain sheep will disappear before the onslaught of three hungry men. We were now in a fever country, so next morning, as a precaution, I served out a dose of quinine to all hands. The road onwards was of the worst description, and the country barren and uninteresting, but the presence of parrots and other birds showed that we were nearing a tropical climate.

Chillon, where we halted for the night, proved a miserable

village whose inhabitants seemed all stricken with malaria, and after much difficulty we succeeded in getting a chicken and some dried maize-leaves for ourselves and our beasts. The *Corregidor*, or local head-man, looked in when we had finished our meal, and told some nerve-racking tales of the road that lay before us, where, he assured us, man-eating tigers and bandits abounded. He was evidently trying to frighten us for some object only known to himself, so Carapé and I told him some equally romantic tales of our adventures, upon which he relapsed into silence, not forgetting, however, to charge us an extortionate price the next morning for our food and lodging. At Saipina we halted at a sugar estate of an amiable Bolivian of gigantic stature, who gave us an excellent breakfast and fodder for our mules, for which he refused to make any charge. He assured me that the country here was rich in gold and petroleum, and showed me a sample of the latter, which he said he had extracted from a deposit nearby. Small game was abundant in this district, and we saw several small deer (*guazú*) and a number of wild turkeys, but neither the man-eating tigers nor the bandits of the *Corregidor* of Chillon were in evidence. For several leagues the only vegetation to be seen in this dry, waterless country consisted of giant cacti, many twenty feet and more in height. Some of these, apparently unable to resist the drought, had perished, and afforded a very curious sight, the pulpy flesh having fallen away and leaving exposed the tall bleached skeleton of the plant, still standing in an erect and melancholy poise. Farther on the country became wooded and, in places, beautiful with orchids and wild passion-flowers. Here we halted on November the 9th, which being the birthday of King Edward, I served out to all hands a liberal "tot" of rum in which we drank His Majesty's health. Julian must have had what the French call *le vin mauvais*, for on the following day he became distinctly mutinous, and it was only through my threats of chastisement that he was brought to order. The traveller in South America is forced to punish a servant who is obviously out to make trouble, but personally I have a great aversion to striking any person in my service, for one can no longer respect a man who will take a beating. Fortunately it is rarely necessary, for, on the whole, if properly treated, the peon is a willing and often a devoted servant.

The road had for some time past been steadily growing worse, and one morning, when fortunately the light was good, our animals had to scramble for several miles over slippery boulders and narrow ledges of rock, assuming a position very similar to that of a fly walking down a wall. I had already on my various

journeys seen something of bad and even dangerous going, but nothing to compare with this. The scenery was wonderful, with thick impenetrable forest on either side. At a small ranch, where we halted, I learnt the names of two of the worst passes which had given us the most trouble. They were "El Suspiro" ("The Sigh") and "Piedras Borrachas" ("Drunken Stones"), and were indeed aptly named. As an indication that the road was not without its perils we passed a number of crosses where travellers who met their death were buried. The inscription on one of these crosses said: "Traveller who passeth by, say an Ave Maria for the soul of Antonio Ribera who met a violent death on this spot." Julian, and even Carapé looked relieved when the track presently broadened to a road affording a reasonable foothold to our sorely-tried animals. We were now roughly sixty miles from Santa Cruz, and I was assured by some muleteers whom we met that the remainder of the journey was plane sailing. Our next halt was at a wayside house called Tres Cruces, three crosses, which, to my astonishment, was connected to Santa Cruz by telephone. The local *Corregidor* had been instructed to advise the Prefect of the latter town of my arrival, and we were all cheered by the thought that in a few days we should have a rest for ourselves and beasts after the fatigues and hardships of the road. While at Tres Cruces I saw a green snake about three feet in length, lying coiled up on the ground in a banana patch, and having at the moment nothing in my hand to defend myself with I strolled back to the ranch for my whip. When I returned the snake was still in the same place and followed my movements closely with its eyes. As I appeared, it sprang at me like a flash with open jaws, and I only just had time to step aside and break its back with my whip. I examined it and found to my surprise that its poison fangs and glands were well developed, so I had had a narrow escape. Hudson, the naturalist, and author of so many delightful stories of the Argentine, is very severe on the wanton killing of snakes, but I cannot agree with him, for a layman cannot always tell the difference between the poisonous and harmless varieties, and by leaving a poisonous one alive you may endanger a fellow-being's life. There is in South America a perfectly innocuous green snake, for which I at first mistook the one I killed, but it was fortunate for me that I fetched my whip before proceeding to inspect it at close quarters.

We slept at a place called Rancho Segundo, having covered thirty miles that day. The owner told me he had been a slave on the rubber plantations of the Beni, whence he had recently escaped. He certainly looked as if he had had a bad time, and gave a harrowing account of his experiences.

On the morning of our last stop before reaching Santa Cruz, while passing through a forest, a red wolf ran down the path in front of me, and I had a good look at him before he jumped aside into the jungle. I have always held this beast to be one of the most attractive of the South American fauna. It is called in Guarani *aguara guazú* (the big fox), and is bright red in colour, has a thin, black mane, and is about the size of a collie. The red wolf is a solitary animal, and is rarely dangerous to man, though, when wounded, he will sometimes attack. They are never found in great numbers, and are probably in danger of becoming extinct.

At midday we descended to a green plain where the heat was very intense, and shortly after an officer in uniform rode up and, saluting, informed me that he was the advance guard of a party consisting of the Prefect and other notables who had come out to meet me and escort me into the town. A little farther on we met the party, and, after an exchange of speeches, in which the Prefect laid stress on the fact that I was the first British representative to visit Santa Cruz, we sat down in a wayside hut and drank luke-warm English stout, which must, in this far-away spot, have cost the price of the best vintage champagne. I thought it the reverse of refreshing in this torrid climate, but courtesy compelled me to consume several glasses of this head-achy stuff.

On reaching Santa Cruz I found that rooms had been retained for me at a primitive but not uncomfortable inn; the mules and my horse were sent to an adjacent paddock, and after a good dinner I retired to bed, which boasted the unwonted luxury of snowy-white sheets edged with native handmade lace.

CHAPTER XXV

A THIRSTY RIDE TO A BYGONE CAPITAL

SANTA CRUZ DE LA SIERRA, to give it its full name, is a town of some twenty thousand inhabitants, and must be practically unchanged in appearance since the early days of the Spanish conquest.

With the exception of the cathedral, which is a massive and ugly modern stone building, the houses are of one story, and built of *adobe*, or sun-dried, mud bricks. It has but little trade with the outer world, and, as has been shown, is only accessible on mule- or horse-back over the most primitive roads. The inhabitants, also, present a picture of Spanish pre-colonial times, and among the upper classes have kept their race pure from the admixture of Indian blood. They are the descendants of Andalusians, speaking with the soft intonation of Southern Spain, and do not use the Americanisms which have crept into the language in practically all other parts of South America. Another curious resemblance, equally unknown in the other Republics, as far as my experience goes, is that, as in Andalusia, the men of the lower classes wear the short jackets which were introduced into England after the Peninsular Wars and are known by us as Eton jackets. Many of the women are beautiful, with delicate olive complexions, regular features, and small hands and feet.

Shortly after my arrival I visited the Prefect, who was very friendly and helpful; Mr. Bloomfield, our Vice-Consul; and the principal families of the place. Foreigners in Santa Cruz are scarce, so my arrival had caused no little stir, and I was plied with questions as to the doings of the outer world. The old ladies were especially inquisitive; they had never seen a railway engine or a steamboat, and questioned me eagerly as to the means by which these were propelled. Horses were placed at my disposition by various friendly inhabitants, and, in company with the Prefect, I enjoyed some pleasant rides in the vicinity of the town, on small, barb-like horses trained in the manner of the old Spanish school. For ten days I enjoyed this life of ease, while my mules, under the influence of rest and good feeding, rapidly improved in condition. This was very necessary, for I was told that the road before us was by no means easy going, and that in places there was often a lack of water.

One morning Carapé and Julian brought the animals in from

their paddock for inspection, and having decided that they were fit to travel we set forth on the following day, November the 22nd, at 7 a.m., the lateness of the hour being due to the fact that a number of friends had announced their intention of riding with me for a couple of leagues and putting me on my way. This is a pleasant custom in the remoter parts of South America, where trains and steamers are unknown, and we set off, an imposing cavalcade of prancing steeds, with silver bedizened saddles and trappings. After travelling for a couple of leagues I begged my friends to return before the heat of the day was on them, and calling a halt the Prefect's servant produced a bottle of wine and served each of us with a glass. The Prefect then made a short speech from the saddle, wishing me a prosperous journey and calling for three cheers for King Edward VII, to which I responded suitably. Then, after much hand-shaking and bidding me "go with God," my friends left me to pursue my journey.

Carapé was very cheerful after his rest, and expressed his approval of Santa Cruz and its ladies, who, he said, were very beautiful. The rascal had a way with him and had, no doubt, beguiled his stay with one or more little love-affairs. Julian was sullen and morose as ever, complained much of the heat, and had nothing good to say of Santa Cruz. I told him we were now heading for Sucre and his native mountains, but even this news did not bring a smile to his lips. We halted for the night at a place called Pozo de Basilio, where there is a fair-sized empty ranch, and that boon for the traveller, a well of clear, sweet water. The spot had a history which is as follows :

The Pozo de Basilio is on the main road from Santa Cruz to Sucre, over which there is a considerable amount of traffic in rubber coming from the Beni. Some years ago the ranch at which we stopped belonged to an old man named Don Basilio, who had established himself on the spot and extorted from the travellers a toll of one dollar for every man and every beast using the water. In a waterless country this was an extortion which could not endure for very long ; nor did it. One evening a party composed of three men with a train of mules arrived from the north. Men and beasts were parched with thirst, for it was a time of drought and the well at the last halting-place had dried up, so for forty-eight hours they had not wetted their lips. Don Basilio, however, oblivious of the danger in his greed for money, insisted that he should be paid before they had access to the water. He was a miser and a madman, but perhaps a brave man as well. While the altercation was going on, one of the party crept up behind him and, plunging his knife into his throat, killed him instantly. The party, after drinking their fill

and watering their beasts, ransacked the hut, and after much searching found the old man's hoard—the contributions of countless thirsty travellers—buried in the earth. They made off the next morning with their money, and were never brought to justice. The old man's bones were, however, found some weeks later and buried in Santa Cruz.

It was a pleasant-looking spot with good pasture for our animals, and the water of the well was both abundant and sweet. Carapé roasted a piece of beef which he had carried under his saddle from Santa Cruz, and on this we supped ; then, turning into our blankets, slept peacefully till dawn.

We had, on the advice of friends in Santa Cruz, brought with us a small keg holding about five pints, and this we filled and loaded on one of our mules before leaving. It was well that we did so, for during the whole of that day's journey, on which we covered some forty miles, we found no water, and the mules and the horses were much distressed by thirst when we halted in the evening. We ourselves had not suffered, for the contents of the keg had been equally distributed between Carapé, Julian, and myself during the day, which was very hot. There is usually no scarcity of water in South America, and we confidently expected to find it on the following day. These hopes proved, however, illusory, and at midday we suffered not a little from thirst ourselves, and our animals, which had not drunk for thirty-six hours, were in a very exhausted condition. We searched the roots of one or two bulb-like plants for moisture, but unsuccessfully, and there was nothing for it but to press on at the best speed possible. Carapé laughed and joked and asked Julian, who as usual bore his troubles hardly, if he would like a lemon. The expression on the muleteer's face at this sally of my follower cannot be described. He looked and, no doubt, felt murderous. I rode on at the head of the train, sucking a small pebble, which appeared to give relief. The fierce sun beat down pitilessly on exhausted man and beast, until about five in the evening, on rounding a turning in the road, my horse pricked up his ears for the first time that day. I knew that his keen senses had heard or smelt something ; and he was right, for a little farther on I saw signs of cultivation. We hustled our now willing animals along, and a few hundred yards farther came across a *trapiche*, a wooden mill driven by an old mule, which was crushing sugar-cane, the juice of which was pouring out in a steady stream into the receptacle below. What a sight for three thirsty men ! With trembling fingers I extracted a silver dollar from my pocket, so as to have it ready when we reached the spot. What if the man who was standing by feeding the

mill refused? Don Basilio's fate flashed through my memory. But the man was well enough disposed, and realizing our distress he quickly filled a large calabash with a generous supply of the cane-juice. How good it tasted may be imagined. I took a refreshing drink and handed it to Carapé, who followed suit, passing it to the morose Julian, who finished the bowl. We had another, but I drank sparingly, and warned my followers to do likewise. Then we took our animals down to the stream, and, after letting them drink with the bits on, for safety, we remounted and rode to the Indian village nearby. We had satisfied our thirst, but were, as well, nearly famished; so seeing some very skinny fowls about, I went into an old woman's hut and, holding out a silver dollar, asked her to sell me one. She roundly refused, and while arguing with her I noticed a cob of maize lying on a shelf. Picking this up, I scattered a few grains on the ground, whereupon five or six chickens collected round me. I hit the fattest of them over the head with my whip, and picking it up threw the old woman the dollar and walked off with my prize. She started shrieking and howling as if I had nearly murdered her, and presently some Indians gathered round in a somewhat menacing way. "Show them your revolver, *patron*," said Carapé complacently, and went on with his preparations for cooking our dinner of boiled chicken and some rice which we had with us. It made a good meal for the three of us. We camped here for the night, and I told Carapé to sleep with one eye open, for the rape of the chicken was still exercising the minds of the Indians, as was evident from their occasional shouts and the shrill cries of their women. After lying awake for an hour or so the noises died away and I fell asleep.

There was no lack of water on the following day, for the track lay along a stream which was in flood, and consequently so muddy that the mules, which are fastidious animals, refused to touch it. My horse, however, being less particular, found it quite to its liking.

These floods, or *crecientes*, as they are called in Spanish, come very suddenly in these countries, and I have known streams which were only knee-deep in the morning become in a few hours an angry, dashing torrent of water, sufficiently deep and rapid to drown horse and man. The rainy season was coming on now, and I was anxious to reach the highlands before the regular rains commenced.

I had chosen this route to Sucre, and thence on to Tupiza, on the Argentine frontier, firstly because the country through which I passed was but little known, and secondly because Sucre was an important town, having formerly been the capital of

Bolivia, and it seemed politic for me, as the British representative, to visit it now that an opportunity occurred. We met but few travellers on the march, and the country, though rich in pasture-land, was but little populated. Occasionally a troop of rubber-freighters, returning from Sucre, passed us, their mules trotting gaily on the homeward track, tingling their bells as they went. More often, however, we were alone on the road.

On the fourth day out we entered a forest, the shade of which was very welcome after the heat of the plains, and, travelling till sunset, we then halted at a suitable spot where a clearing had been made by the *gomer*os, or rubber-freighters. I had been told that this forest would take from five to six days to traverse, and the question of food for our animals became a serious one, for there was but little grass to be found. Carapé was, however, as usual, equal to the occasion, and cutting a long stick he pulled down from the trees a quantity of orchids and parasitic plants—*flores del aire* (flowers of the air)—and on these both the mules and my horse fed eagerly. There was but little game. Here and there, in the open spaces, a *guazú* was to be seen, and sometimes at the hour of sunset a fox ran across the trail. This animal, slightly bigger than a European fox, and grey in colour, is in appearance like a cross between a wolf and a fox. The native Guarani name it *aguará*. One evening I saw an animal unknown to me and, I believe, to science. I was some couple of hundred yards in advance of my followers when, just ahead of me, I espied some creature which was busily engaged in exploring the contents of an ant-hole which lay in the middle of the track. Its head and neck were deep down in the hole, and so immersed was the creature in its occupation that it evidently did not hear my coming. I jumped off my horse and ran up, and as I was about to strike it with my whip it emerged from the hole and jumped on to a low bank nearby. I was so surprised at this sudden movement of the animal that I stood gazing at it and forbore to strike. The creature for a moment made as if to menace me, but, changing its mind, it sprang into the forest. During these brief seconds, however, its appearance was clearly fixed on my memory. It was evidently of the cat tribe, jet black in colour, and some three feet in length, or perhaps a little over. Its legs were extremely short and gave it an ungainly appearance, and its face was comically round, and, unlike the rest of its body, a light chocolate brown in colour. My two men behind me had halted, watching my movements, and Carapé had also seen the animal, but said it was quite unknown to him. Julian, being a mountain dweller, knew nothing of the fauna of these parts. I have subsequently described the animal to several

natives, and to more than one European zoologist, and none knew it or could give me any information about it.

These vast tropical forests, such as the one we were traversing, are the home of that strange and malignant beast the vampire bat, and we unfortunately did not escape its attentions. We camped one night in a clearing in the forest, so small as to give us only just sufficient space for ourselves and animals, which we tethered to the trees. I slept under my mosquito-net, which I attached to the bough of a tree overhead, and was awakened some hours later by a faint tingling in the toe of my right foot, which had got outside the net. Inspection showed a small round hole and a dark spot of blood or two on my blanket, so probably the vampire, for such it was, had been disturbed at his work by my awakening. But others of his kind were abroad, and not sleeping very well after this, I rose at the first streak of dawn and looked out of my mosquito-net with the intention of calling Carapé to get me a cup of coffee. A strange sight arrested me. The yellow mule, one of the cargo animals, was standing in a most dejected attitude, its withers a mass of dried, coagulated blood, while blood was also streaming down its sides on to the ground. "Carapé," I cried, "the *baya* has been mauled by a tiger." My servant's tousled head looked out of the blankets and, gazing at the mule for a moment, he said: "*Por Dios, Patron, si.*" We went up to examine the animal, but found that we were both wrong in our conjecture. The mule was the unfortunate victim of two, or possibly more, vampire bats, and she was literally sucked dry. It was clear that she could carry no load that day, but we hoped that she would be able to follow her companions. So we had our coffee and, loading the other pack-mules with a double load, started off, Carapé bringing up the rear, with the intention of driving the yellow mule. But it was no good, for she was so weak that she could hardly put one foot in front of the other. After deliberation, we decided to abandon her, hoping that she might recover her strength and eventually follow our trail or, at any rate, stray into some neighbouring ranch, where she would be cared for. It was kinder than shooting the poor beast, who watched us with sad eyes as we rode off, though she made no attempt to follow us. After a slow journey, owing to the remaining pack-mule being overladen, we slept again in the forest, happily for the last time, for our animals were now much pulled down through lack of grass, and we ourselves had suffered from the damp atmosphere of the forest, through which the rays of the sun could not penetrate. Carapé, indeed, had a pretty sharp bout of malaria, and was delirious one evening, but I gave him a strong dose of Epsom-

salt, followed by some quinine, which soon brought him round, though he was weak for some days after. As for myself, one side of my face and my right ear had come out in an unsightly rash, which I was quite at a loss to account for, and which caused me no little discomfort.

We were glad, therefore, when we finally emerged from the forest, and after travelling all day through a rich grazing land, we camped for the night in an Indian village, where we obtained fresh meat for ourselves and some much-needed maize for our animals. The village must have formerly been a Jesuit settlement, for, still standing, there was an old church, of which the roof had fallen in, and its only occupants were bats and owls. We were only a few minutes' walk from the Rio Grande, which was some three hundred yards broad at this spot and of considerable depth.

As we had to cross the river on the following morning we made an early start and were at the banks at dawn, shouting loudly, all three of us, for the *pasadero*, whose hut was on the opposite bank, and who was evidently fast asleep. The *pasadero* is a man who makes a living by swimming the mules, horses, and travellers with their luggage across the rivers, and he is, of course, only to be found at certain places where the amount of traffic makes it worth his while to carry on his job. As a rule, they are wonderful swimmers. As neither shouts nor distant revolver shots would awaken this particular ferryman, I fired a shot through the top of his thatched roof, and shortly after this he looked out of his door, waved his hand to us, and after a minute or two came down to the bank and plunged into the river. He swam, as all natives do, with his right arm, while with his left hand he covered the vital parts of his body to protect them from the attacks of the *piraña* or other voracious fish. Attached to his shoulders was a semicircular yoke of wood as an aid to buoyancy, and cleaving the water with powerful overhand strokes he soon reached the spot where we stood and scrambled out of the water. It was a chilly morning, and before bargaining with the naked and shivering *pasadero* I gave him a good tot of rum, which he evidently appreciated. While he was drinking this I noticed that a portion of his anatomy was missing, and asked him how it had happened. "*Pirai*" (fish), he replied, and, warmed by the rum, he laughed, as if it were a good joke. It must, however, have been the reverse of a joking matter at the time, for the fish—it was probably a *piraña*—had made off with a good large mouthful of the unfortunate man's person, so that one realized that a ferryman's job in these waters was not without its trials. The *pasadero* was a skilful

man at his job, and, with the aid of Carapé and Julian, the animals were safely landed on the far side of the river. I remained where I was with my saddle and the small mule-trunk which contained my clothes, and presently Carapé and the *pasadero* swam back to me. Seating myself in the *tapa carga*, or large ox-hide which covers the cargo carried by the pack-mule, they skilfully tied up the ends so that it resembled in shape a portable bath-tub, and each man supporting this with one hand and swimming with the other, they landed me safely on the other side without wetting either myself or my belongings. Paying the *pasadero*, and giving him an extra present for his good work, we proceeded on our way, the mules and my horse stepping out bravely after their feed of maize on the previous evening. We were now within a day's ride of Lagunillas, a large *estancia* which lay on our road, and where I determined to call a halt of several days.

We reached Lagunillas that evening, and on entering the village I inquired for the house of Doña Josefa, the owner of the *estancia*, to whom I had a letter of introduction from the Prefect of Santa Cruz. It was nearby, a comfortable and substantial building with a thatched roof and a large garden at the back, in which roses and dahlias grew in profusion. Riding up to the porch, I asked an Indian servant-girl if her mistress were at home. The girl showed me into a large reception room, plainly furnished, with chairs standing ranged against the walls, from which a couple of large "Empire" mirrors hung. It was the typical South American *sala* of well-to-do folk. In a few moments Doña Josefa entered, and, replying courteously to my salutation, she read the letter from the Prefect which I handed her. When she had finished it, she said, "Señor, my house is at your disposal for yourself and your servants, and I will give instructions for your animals to be taken to the stables. You must be hungry after your long journey. If you will excuse me, I will attend to the preparations of your supper." With this pleasing invitation the lady left me, and I went to see my horse and mules stabled and my two followers made comfortable. Doña Josefa was waiting in the porch when I returned, and conducted me to the dining-room, where a simple but excellent supper was served, washed down with a bottle of home-made wine. After the meal my hostess remarked on the rash which, as I have already related, had spread over the right side of my face, and asked leave to look at it, for she claimed some knowledge of native ailments and their cure. After careful examination she said, "Señor, you have been bitten on the ear by a very poisonous spider which we call *mico mico*. The treatment which I venture to recommend

is somewhat unsightly but by no means painful, and will, after a few applications, effect a certain cure." I asked what the treatment was. "Painting the parts affected with ink," replied Doña Josefa, and, on my consenting, she produced a bottle of ordinary writing ink, and proceeded to daub the right side of my face with the liquid, which she applied with a feather. I must have presented a comical appearance when her work was finished, but the lady did not smile, and assured me that, with a few more applications, the unsightly rash would totally disappear. Events proved that this wonderful woman was right; but for three days I had to go about with one side of my face stained blue-black. But such is native courtesy that no one at Lagunillas looked surprised or asked any questions. The lady who, as I afterwards discovered, ruled with a benevolent despotism over a district the size of a small European State, had ordered, and herself applied, the cure to the face of the stranger, and that was enough for them. On the fourth day my face was free of the rash and the skin perfectly whole, and in due course the inkstain faded away.

I slept the evening of my arrival in the unwonted luxury of a bed with sheets embroidered with lace, and awoke thoroughly refreshed after my rest. After I had dressed and the maid had brought me my coffee I walked on to the veranda, which was level with the street, and sat enjoying the early morning air and a cigarette. A few minutes later a humble funeral procession passed at a little distance from where I sat, and with lazy curiosity I asked an individual, who was standing nearby, who had died. He mentioned a woman's name, and more out of courtesy to the dead than from any real interest I asked what she had died of. The man replied that she had been bitten by a snake, and then my curiosity was aroused and I asked him to tell me how it had happened. He then related the following story: The woman had recently given birth to a child and was still confined to her bed. One evening her husband, returning from his work, had gone into her room when a strange sight met his eyes. His wife was lying asleep with the child clutched at her side, and on her breast, drawing her milk, was coiled a large black snake. Either the man or perhaps the child must have made some sudden movement, for the snake raised its head from the breast on which it was feeding, and struck savagely with its fangs into the flesh. The woman awoke screaming, and in an hour was dead from the combined effects of the shock and the poison, for the snake was of a highly venomous species. This was the story as the man told it to me, and it was afterwards confirmed by my hostess. But there was one detail which my informant added which I

thought an embroidery, though for aught I know it might have been equally true with the rest. For he concluded, "Look, señor, at the cunning of this Satan [*este Satanas*], for the snake, while it fed on the mother's milk, placed the end of its tail in the child's mouth to keep it quiet." It is well known that snakes will draw the milk from cows which are lying down, and it is a common belief among the natives that snakes gather in a corral for that purpose, and that it is highly dangerous to walk there unless it is light enough to see where one steps.

There was only one foreigner in Lagunillas, an old Frenchman, who had a store and a garden in which he grew grapes. He had fought in the war of 1870, and being of a wandering disposition had drifted down to South America and finally settled in this remote village, where he had now been living for over thirty years. He had, however, not forgotten his native tongue and enjoyed chatting with me over a bottle of home-made wine.

He had some amusing tales of bygone days when the famous outlaw Pedro Luna harried the country between Lagunillas and the Argentine frontier. The fame of Luna still endures in some of the Gaucho songs, but from what the old man told me he must have been a most revolting scoundrel, pitiless as a tiger, and revelling in the shedding of human blood and in the torture of his victims. But in those days murder was looked on very lightly. The Frenchman related that once, when travelling over the frontier between Bolivia and Argentine, he passed the ranch of an acquaintance and saw his son, aged ten, playing on the doorstep. Drawing rein for a moment, he said good-day to the lad, adding the common Spanish phrase, "*Que hay de nuevo?*" ("What news is there?"), to which the child replied coolly: "None, except that papa cut the throats of two foreigners last night."

I spent some pleasant days in Lagunillas, while my animals rested, and enjoyed the hospitality of my hostess to the full. Doña Josefa was a very busy woman. In the saddle every morning at daybreak, she would ride for hours about her cattle ranch, superintending every detail, visiting the sick, administering justice, and settling disputes. The district of Lagunillas is a large one, almost as big, in fact, as one of the Balkan States, and this indefatigable lady was virtually its ruler. There was, it is true, a Sub-Prefect and some minor officials, but these had the good sense to recognize competence and merit when they saw it, and to confine their duties to carrying out Doña Josefa's orders and behests.

Before leaving I asked my hostess to permit me to send her some small remembrance of my stay, and begged her to tell me

what she would like. Doña Josefa replied that nothing would give her more pleasure than a copy of *Don Quixote* and a standard work on physiology, so when I returned to London one of the first things I did was to dispatch these books to her.

In return I received a letter of thanks from this gracious lady of the lakes, which is so illustrative of the courtly spirit of Spain, and of the grace and dignity of the Castilian tongue, that I cannot forbear quoting it in these pages. The writing, with its slanting, narrow letters, but clear as print, was that which is taught in the convents even to-day, and the letter was as follows :

Carapecito,
7 Junio de 1911.

Señor Ministro de Inglaterra
Cecilio Gosling,
La Paz.

Grande Señor y Distinguido Amigo,

Depreco a Dios que mantenta inalterable y cumplida Su importante salud ye le otorgue toda prosperidad.

El Señor Subprefecto de la provincia, Dr. Victor A. Saavedra, me ha entregado puntualmente su donativo de valor moral incalculable que, por Su conducto habia Ud. tenido la generosidad de enviarme, consistente en los libros "El Quijote de la Mancha," "La Historia de Marruecos en España" y el Tradato de Fisiologia, por el que ruego se digne aceptar el testimonio de mi mas grande agradecimiento, juntamente con la protesta que la hago de conservarlos con mucho esmero como recuerdo suyo, y la mas elocuente demostracion de los sentimientos de estimacion que sin merecimientos de mi parte se sirve dispensarme con tanta fineza.

Aprovecho de esta nueva ocasion para reiterarle el ofrecimiento de mi servicios asi como mis sentimientos de aprecio personal como su atenta amiga y S. S.

JOSEFA PADILLA.

(Translation)

CARAPECITO,
June 7th, 1911.

To the English Minister,
Cecil Gosling,
La Paz.

GREAT SIR AND DISTINGUISHED FRIEND,

I pray God that He may maintain unaltered and good your important health, and that He may grant you prosperity.

The Sub-Prefect of the Province of the Cordillera, Dr. Victor A. Saavedra, has punctually delivered your gift of incalculable moral value, which through him you have had the generosity to send me, consisting of the volumes "Don Quixote of la Mancha," "The History of Morocco in Spain," and a treatise on physiology. For these I beg

that you will deign to accept the testimony of my greatest thanks, together with the protestation which I make to you to preserve them with great care as a memory of yourself and of the most eloquent demonstration of the feelings of esteem which, without merit on my part, you have thus conveyed to me with so much delicacy.

I take advantage of this fresh occasion to repeat to you the offer of my services, together with my sentiments of the personal appreciation of your attentive friend and servant,

JOSEFA PADILLA.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE LAND OF THE VAMPIRES, AND UNTRODDEN WAYS

ON leaving Lagunillas our road for the first day lay through some rich pasture and cattle lands of this district, and noticing that a number of the cows, horses, and even mules wore a necklace of garlic round their necks, I inquired, when we stopped at midday at a wayside ranch to bait, what was the purpose of this custom. The man replied that in this neighbourhood vampire bats were a terrible scourge, and that the necklet of garlic was to preserve the animals from their attacks.

Here was a strange thing! In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when people in Europe, and especially in Hungary, believed explicitly in the existence of human vampires, they also used garlic, which was hung over the bed of the victim of their attacks. What is the connexion between these similar customs of two continents between which there had then, as far as we know, never been any communication?

After leaving the country of the vampires we came to a mountainous land whose inhabitants were Quichua Indians. The men wear a peculiar head-dress made of black felt and studded with silver disks, while the shape is that of a Roman helmet. There is nothing very noticeable about their dress, which scarcely differs from that of the Aymarà Indians, and, like these, their weapon is the usual plaited sling of llama wool.

The Quichua women have also a picturesque head-dress of black felt, but round in shape, and equally heavily studded with silver ornaments. They are a simple pastoral people, living unmolested in their mountains, unchanged since the days of the conquest, and much more friendly than the Aymaràs of the *Puno* of La Paz and its neighbourhood. As I rode past, an old woman—she looked about a hundred—knelt down in the road, lifted her arms in supplication, and called in a loud voice to me, "*Vira Cocha*," which means God or king, and is a title by which the Incas were saluted three hundred years back.

Julian was so rejoiced at returning to a mountainous climate that his behaviour became worse than usual, and one evening, when he was both drunk and insubordinate, on Carapé's advice, I gave him a sound thrashing, which speedily brought him to his senses. Our animals travelled well, and on the fourth day out



"OUR MIXED BAG FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS USED TO BE BETWEEN TWO AND
THREE HUNDRED BIRDS." [See page 243]

from Lagunillas we arrived within two leagues of Sucre, where, to my surprise, I found a landau and pair, with a coachman in livery waiting to bring me into the town in state. Travel-stained and in my rough clothes, in which I had slept for three weeks, my appearance must have contrasted strangely with the elegance of the equipage which the Prefect, who was informed of my movements, had sent to meet me.

Entering the city, I drove up to an imposing building, situated in the principal square, where rooms had been arranged for me. Having washed and changed into the one suit of town clothes which my luggage contained, I presently received the visit of the Prefect—a very pleasant and cultured man—and of the other notabilities of the place, including His Majesty's Consul, an old resident and merchant in the town. The local club had made me its honorary member, and after dining there I returned early to my palace and enjoyed the luxury of a long sleep in a comfortable bed.

There is no town which has played a greater part in the history of South America than Sucre. In the early days of the conquest, when it was known as Charcas, it was the seat of Government of the territory which was then called Upper Peru; after the Wars of Independence it became the capital of the newly established Republic of Bolivia.

Since the removal of the capital in recent times to La Paz, on account of the greater accessibility of the latter town, Sucre has lost much of its former importance and now lives chiefly in memories of the past. To travellers like myself, however, it loses none of its charm thereby, and I have seldom visited a pleasanter city or one boasting of a better climate. Situated at an altitude of between five and six thousand feet, it is never unduly hot or cold, and the roses in the valley in which it lies bloom every month in the year. The streets are broad and spacious, and the houses, many of them dating from the period of the conquest, are painted in a variety of colours—pink, light blue, yellow, ochre—and this with a blue sky above makes an attractive effect.

Sucre, which is sometimes styled the "Athens of South America," boasts of an ancient university, where, in the early colonial days and subsequently, students from all parts of the continent received their education.

Having fulfilled my social duties in the capital of Bolivia I prepared once more to take the road, my first destination being Potosí, that famous city whose mines once supplied all Europe with silver, and thence to Tupiza, a Bolivian town on the Argentine frontier. From Tupiza it was my intention to take train to

San Rafael, a small Argentine town in the province of Jujuy, where I hoped to hire animals to take me across the Andes, by an unfrequented pass known as the "Paso de las Damas" into Chile.

On leaving Sucre, we climbed steadily for some hours; when we reached the *puno*, or highlands, a fierce gale was blowing, and the temperature was so low that, though I was wrapped in two heavy ponchos, they were of so little avail that I felt that I had nothing on. Presently we rode into a violent hailstorm, which further added to our discomfort. The hail was literally the size of pigeon's eggs, and our mules showed great uneasiness and reluctance to face the heavy pellets of ice which fell in a driving blast on their unprotected heads and ears. It was a regular blizzard, and worse than anything we had yet met with on our journey.

We arrived at Potosi after travelling for three days, and having stabled my animals I set off on foot with Carapé to explore this ancient and renowned city. It is situated at about an altitude of eleven thousand feet on a desolate and exposed plain, and the climate is about as disagreeable as one can imagine—cold and bleak, with a perpetual wind blowing large clouds of foul dust in one's face. As is usually the case in these high altitudes, the Indian inhabitants are the reverse of cleanly in their habits. But the town itself is decidedly interesting and has many historical associations. The houses, which are built of massive stone, are of the early period of the conquest, and in most cases they bear the arms of their former owners carved over the entrance. The streets are narrow, and handsomely carved wooden balconies almost touch each other on either side. The whole city is pervaded with a sense of the romance, as well as of the former might and greatness, of Spain.

One of the principal sights of Potosi is the *Casa de Moneda*, or Mint, at the entrance to which there are two massive carved wooden doors with heavy brass knockers attached, one of which represents the Austrian double-headed eagle and the other the Lion of Castile. They are placed at a height suitable for a man on horseback to reach. This was the first mint working in South America, and its cumbrous but admirably fashioned machinery with wooden stamps and dies are still visible and in good order. In the building are also a number of interesting oil-paintings, depicting scenes of the Spanish conquest.

After doing the rounds I called on the Prefect of Potosi, who was good enough to ask me to dine with him that evening. I excused myself, however, on the ground that the return to these high altitudes had affected my health, and that I was going to

bed early in preparation for my start on the following day. The Prefect expressed his concern, and agreed that the climate of Potosi was not all that it should be, and advised me not to take off my clothes on going to bed, and, above all, if I valued my health, to avoid washing even my hands in water. I thanked him for his advice, which may have been sound. It was, at any rate, very closely followed by the great majority of people over whom he ruled. Potosi was formerly so famed for its riches that "*Vale un Potosi*" became a proverb in the Spanish language, indicating fabulous wealth. But the mines which, according to Prescott, supplied Europe with silver for four centuries are now for the most part abandoned, the once busy mint is silent, and the city lives only in the memories of its past greatness.

The road to Tupiza is one of the best I have travelled over in South America, being broad and mainly level. The *postas*, or wayside inns, are, however, of the vilest description, being literally alive with bugs and vermin of every kind. One night we arrived famished at such a *posta*, which was empty. A pot of maize was simmering in water on a fire of llama-dung, and this, after waiting for a time for the owner to appear, we greedily devoured, for we were ravenous, having practically eaten nothing all day. Our mules had suffered like ourselves, and Carapé, after foraging in the outhouse, found some barley straw, on which we fed them. Just after dusk a very drunken Indian, who turned out to be the master of the *posta*, made his appearance on the scene. When he found that we had helped ourselves to the pot of maize he became highly incensed, though I explained that we had every intention of paying for what we had used. Kind words having, however, produced no effect, I cursed him freely and told him we should report him to the authorities in Potosi. The man was drunk enough to be dangerous and talked in a threatening way, but realizing that he could do nothing against the three of us he went off in a rage, vowing that he would return with his friends to turn us out. When he was gone I prepared to lay my blankets for a bed in the open, but Carapé suggested that it would be wiser to sleep indoors, and that meanwhile he and Julian would keep watch outside, ready to warn me if the *postero* returned. Entering the single room of the *posta* with a lighted candle I made up my bed in a corner on the floor. While doing this I noticed a number of insects on the wall, but did not attach any special importance to them, as they bore no resemblance to any known species of suckers of human blood. Black in colour, with prominent antennæ, I thought that they were a harmless insect of the fields which had sought shelter within from the cold outside.

Rolling myself up in my ponchos I was soon asleep, but after what could only have been a few moments I woke up with a piercing pain in my leg, followed by an equally fierce stab on my wrist. I sat up, lit my candle, and searched my blankets, but could find nothing. I glanced at the wall. The same harmless-looking insects were there, but it seemed to me that their numbers had increased, and that they were moving their antennæ to and fro in a slightly menacing manner. So I shifted my bed to the middle of the room, and, all desire for sleep having left me, lay with the candle burning, keeping a watchful eye on any possible intruders of my peace, and bearing the while, with what stoicism I could, the burning pain occasioned by the mysterious creature which had bitten me. Suddenly I noticed a little band of the black insects make their way up the wall and thence to the middle of the ceiling. When they had reached a point immediately over my bed one of the insects, perhaps the leader, simply let himself go and fell on my blankets. This was enough for me, and I jumped up, yelling for Carapé, who rushed into the room, thinking, as he afterwards said, that I had been attacked by an Indian. When he learnt the cause of my trouble, and had seen the seemingly innocent creatures on the wall, he said, "By God, *patron*, the room is alive with *binchucas*, the worst and most poisonous bug in South America," and, grabbing my blankets, he made for the door, while I followed, filled with horror at the thought of these noisome things which had preyed on me. Carapé examined each of my blankets, shook them carefully, and arranged them for me on the ground, when I finally fell into a peaceful sleep.

Next morning, when we were saddling our beasts, the owner of this loathsome den arrived, now fairly sober, and paying him what I considered a fair sum for the maize and the fodder we set off breakfastless and as fast as the mules could go. At about ten o'clock we were all famished, but by sheer good luck we came across an old Indian woman selling mutton broth warmed over a fire of llama-dung by the wayside. It had barley in it and tasted good, though I have no doubt that a large percentage of filth entered into the composition. From this spot our road lay downhill, and on the fifth day after leaving Potosi we entered Tupiza at about the hour of sunset. I put up at the only available hotel, and, it being Christmas Day, I ordered a table to be laid and a banquet to be spread for myself and my two companions. We had luxuries such as sardines and olives, a fat steak and fried potatoes, and Argentine tinned peaches for dessert, the whole washed down by two bottles of Mendoza wine, over which I made a little speech, thanking my companions for their services

on the journey and wishing Julian a prosperous return, for he was to travel by direct route with the mules to Oruro on the following day. After this feast I went to sleep, and was awakened the next morning at about seven by Carapé standing by my bed. As soon as I opened my eyes he said, "*Patron*, Julian is lying dead drunk in the stable, the doors of which are open and all the mules have escaped." I quickly put on my clothes, bade my servant fetch his lasso, and we started in search of the animals. After tracking them for some hours over a rough, boggy country, we found them quietly feeding, and after some trouble succeeded in driving them back to Tupiza, where we arrived hot and weary and much out of temper. Julian was nowhere to be found, and as our train was leaving in an hour's time, I hurried to the police authorities and informed them of the man's disappearance. Carapé having meanwhile packed my things, we set off for the station, and having taken tickets for Mendoza, Julian—a drunken and disreputable object—arrived on the scene and demanded his wages. It was clear that I could not trust the rascal with more than a bare sufficiency for expenses on the road, and this I handed to him, giving him at the same time a letter to our Consul in Oruro asking him to pay the man on arrival what was due to him. Julian, however, refused to accept this, and on his assuming a threatening attitude I suddenly lost my temper and hit him good and hard. He fell like a log; as the train was about to start, Carapé and I jumped in and in a moment were off.

I learnt subsequently that Julian arrived at Oruro with all his mules safe and sound, and no doubt had a glorious drunk when he got his wages. But, as Carapé said, he was "*Un Indio malo*" ("A bad Indian").

On arrival at Mendoza I selected a very humble inn for our lodging, for I had no fine clothes to wear, having on the Christmas Eve of our arrival in Tupiza bestowed my blue suit as a parting gift on the errant muleteer. The *meson*, however, which was a sort of house used by cattle-drivers and such people, was quite clean and the food by no means bad.

After exploring Mendoza, a pleasant little mountain town which is the head-quarters of the Argentine wine industry, we again took train for the small camp town of San Rafael, where I hoped to get horses and a guide to take me across the Cordillera of the Andes into Chile. On arrival I found that nobody could give me any advice as to the route I proposed taking, and I was delayed for several days while making inquiries. Finally I was told that there was a Gaucho living some three leagues away from San Rafael who owned some mules, and who had travelled over

the Chilean frontier. On the following morning, therefore, having procured a couple of horses, Carapé and I set out to interview this man. We found him sitting outside his mud hut on a bullock's skull, drinking *maté*. Approaching, I raised my hat and asked if he were the Don Gregorio whom I sought. The Gaucho assented, invited us to dismount, and, tying our reins to the rails of the fence, we seated ourselves each on an ox-skull round a small fire on which a kettle was simmering. Having replenished the *maté* gourd, Don Gregorio passed it to me, and taking a sip, I handed it to my servant. *Maté* drinking is always something of a ceremony, and for some minutes silence reigned. Then, after a few preliminary remarks, I explained the nature of my errand.

The Gaucho was a tall, spare man of between fifty and sixty, with handsome, regular features and long black hair turning grey. He was dressed in the national costume—loose baggy trousers with coltskin boots armed with iron spurs. A black silk handkerchief was knotted loosely round his throat, and in his belt he carried the usual *facon*, or long knife. After listening to my story in silence, he shook his head and said that he was afraid he could not assist me. His mules had just come off a long journey, and though he knew a part of the country which I proposed traversing, he did not know the mountain pass into Chile called the "Paso de las Damas," and for this reason could not act as my guide. Much disappointed at his words, I tried to persuade him to alter his decision, and said that, as he knew a part of the country, it would perhaps not be difficult to make inquiries as to the pass over the Corderilla. The Gaucho looked at me with an air of great dignity and said, "Señor, do you think that at my age I am going to run about stammering [*titubeando*] and asking my way like a man from the towns?" I hastened to placate his wrath, but pressed him once more, for I had hopes that his refusal was not definite, and, at last, after much talking and *maté* drinking, we came to terms, and it was arranged that he should be at my inn on the following day at daybreak. Then, much pleased at the result of our negotiations, we rode back to San Rafael, Carapé remarking that Don Gregorio seemed to be "*Un Gaucho muy decente*" ("A very decent sort of Gaucho"), and that there was no fear as to his keeping his word.

My servant, who was a good judge of character, proved right, for on the following day Don Gregorio arrived before daybreak with the mules, and we were quickly in the saddle and away.

Our road lay through a little-known territory of the Argentine, consisting of great plains of cattle lands, undefiled by railroads and peopled by *estancieros* and Gauchos, who lived a primitive

and pastoral life, as their forbears had done for many years before them.

Don Gregorio, the Gaucho, sat his horse like all his class, as if he was born in the saddle, but when we halted for our midday meal I noticed that he walked with difficulty, and that his right leg was misshapen and bent, as if from some serious mishap. On continuing our journey I asked him how he had injured himself, and he told me the following story.

He had, he said, taken on a job at an *estancia* in the territory known as the White Lagoon (*Laguna Blanca*), which lay on our road, and while lassoing a steer the girths of his saddle broke, and he fell with his horse on top of him, breaking his thigh in two places. "What did you do then?" I asked. "Señor," the Gaucho replied, "I lay where I fell, unable to move, and my companions built a grass roof over my head and brought me food every day, until after two months my bones knit together, but leaving my leg crooked, as you see. God alone cured me." I asked him whether he would not like to have medical advice on our arrival in Chile, but he refused, saying again, "God healed me; I will not undo His work." What suffering this man must have endured lying with his mangled limb, beneath his rude shelter, plagued by heat, flies, and insects of all kinds!

In the evening we passed a rough *boliche*, or drinking shop, and I dismounted and went in to have a look at the place. It was full of swarthy Gauchos, whose huge iron spurs clinked as they moved. One of them asked me to have a drink, which I accepted—it would probably have meant a fight to refuse—and then stood treats all round. Being dressed like themselves, my appearance did not cause any comment, and, having told them that I had come from Bolivia and was proceeding to Chile, I bade them good evening and went on my way. As it was wise to leave the *boliche* as far behind as possible before camping for the night, we rode on for several leagues before we off-saddled. The night was warm and we slept pleasantly under the starry sky.

On the following day, after travelling for a couple of hours, we came to a vast salt lake, through which our track lay. There was no water in the lake, but the salt had crystallized on the surface and looked like thin ice. A strong wind was blowing at the time, and this blew the salt in our faces, causing them to smart unpleasantly, and we were glad when, after some hours, we left the *laguna de sal* behind us. We were now leaving the plains for the highlands, and the night was chilly, so we slept with all the ponchos and all the saddle clothes we could muster to keep us warm. It was wild, desolate-looking country, and Don Gregorio

told me that more than one traveller, overtaken by blizzard and snowstorm, had left his bones in these mountains.

On the following day we crossed a great plain, and at midday I realized one of the wishes of my life, for we passed a small troop of wild horses. They were standing on a little knoll above the track, a black stallion with ten mares, and made an interesting and imposing sight. The mane and tail of the stallion almost touched the ground, and he looked a picture as he snorted defiance and pawed the ground impatiently as we passed at about three hundred yards distance. He seemed about fourteen hands in height, and the mares smaller. Don Gregorio said they were probably the last of the great troops which had formerly ranged over this country, the descendants of the barbs brought over in the sixteenth century by the Spanish *Conquistadores*. They didn't move, and turning my head I watched them till they were out of sight, and the picture has remained in my mind ever since. We slept that evening in the foothills of the Cordillera, for our journey was nearing its end.

On the morning of the next day, as I was riding ahead of my followers, I saw an unusually large puma, or South American lion, which I at first mistook for a big yellow dog. Suddenly, however, realizing what it was, I put spurs to my mule and galloped after the beast which was only about thirty yards off. But the puma quickly out-distanced me and disappeared in some low scrub. It was a fine male, and its coat shone like bronze in the sunshine. These mountain lions are bigger than their brethren of the tropical forests, and do a lot of damage to young calves and sheep. They hunt by moonlight, and often kill half a dozen of these animals just for the lust of slaughter. I have never heard of their attacking human beings, and the Gauchos believe that they are friendly to man. A small bird, evidently of the grouse family, for it had feathered legs, was common in this country. It was hardly bigger than a sparrow, with curious brown and white markings, harmonizing in a very striking manner with the soil. I saw several of these strange little birds, which made no attempt to fly, but crouched immovable until I had passed.

After a very cold night we crossed the Chilean frontier as the sun was beginning to warm our numbed limbs. It was an unusual and pleasant frontier, with no customs officials to make life a misery, and only an iron plate on a post to tell us that we had left one country for another. An hour later we were commencing the descent of the famous "Paso de las Damas," which owes its name to a Spaniard who first discovered it and found the road so impracticable for himself and his beasts that he mockingly

named it the "Ladies' Pass." After our experiences in Bolivia, however, Carapé and I were not much impressed by the difficulties, and at midday we left the worst of the road behind us, and halted at some hot natural springs, where I had a much-needed bath.

Before leaving Chile I had promised a friend—now, alas! no more of this world—to visit him on my return from Bolivia, and I had specified the 14th of January as the approximate date of my arrival.

Considering the distances covered and the nature of the countries I had travelled through our arrival on the afternoon of the following day was no bad performance, and, dusty and thirsty as I was, it was pleasant to hear that a bottle of champagne had been lying on ice for forty-eight hours awaiting me. My companions too were not forgotten, and they feasted and drank far into the night, for our long journey was over. Don Gregorio returned with the mules on the following day, after receiving his pay and a gratification for faithful service. I offered again to take him with me to Santiago to consult a surgeon. He thanked me, but refused to have anything to do with doctors, and in my heart I could not blame him, so I shook the old Gaucho warmly by the hand and bade him God-speed on his return journey.

My friend's property was what is known in Chile as "a blackberry farm," that is to say, land which has been overrun with blackberry bushes. The blackberry has a curious history in this country. It was introduced some forty years ago by an Englishman, who is nearly as much execrated as the German who first imported hares into the Argentine. Owing to the fertility of the soil the first blackberries thrived amazingly and produced fruit nearly twice their natural size. But presently they began to spread over the land, covering whole fields thickly with their thorny tentacles to such an extent that the land thus infested became practically valueless because nothing else could grow on it. It was only by engaging an army of workers and blowing the roots out with dynamite that a blackberry farm could be cleared and made fit for agriculture; but it was often a good business to buy such land for a mere song and to reform it. This was the process on which my friend was now busily engaged. Strangely enough, although the fruit of this exotic blackberry was to be found elsewhere in profusion, the Chileans never touched it. Indeed, they declared it was poison.

Shooting partridge and riding excellent Chilean ponies made the days pass quickly, and I was sorry when the time came to bid my friend farewell, but I little thought, when I clasped his hand, that it was the last time we should meet in this world.

The mail steamer carried Carapé and myself from Valparaiso to Monte Video, where I parted from my faithful follower, who, after this year of wandering, now thought it his duty to return to his wife and family hidden away in some scented orange bower of the Paraguayan country-side. I trust that the brave fellow lives and prospers, and I send him my greetings through these pages.

CHAPTER XXVII

COSAS BOLIVIANES

LONDON was still an agreeable place to return to in 1910, and after my long absence it was pleasant enough to enjoy its luxuries and to see one's relatives and friends.

Shortly after my arrival the weekly paper "Truth" published some sensational articles on the ill-treatment of the labourers in the wild rubber plantations of the Putumayo, a remote district of Peru. In those days public opinion was quickly roused by the thought of cruelty or injustice, and there was a strong feeling that a British official should be sent out to report on the conditions of labour in that somewhat remote and inaccessible spot. One day I received a summons to the Foreign Office from the private secretary of the Foreign Minister who asked, after some preamble, if I knew where the Putumayo was. I answered in the affirmative, and he then inquired if I were prepared to go there on a special mission and to report on the conditions. I again replied in the affirmative and then took my departure.

Some days later, however, I was told that my services would not be required, as another candidate had been selected. In my place the late Roger Casement, a man who had then no experience of South America, was sent.

After this I dismissed official affairs from my mind, and devoted myself to the enjoyment of my leave during the pleasant summer months, and was surprised one morning to receive a telegram from the Foreign Office offering me the post of minister to the Bolivian Republic. My first impulse was to decline the honour, as I feared that my health would not stand a prolonged residence at La Paz, where I had been far from well during the months I had already passed there. On consideration, however, I determined to give the climate another trial, and signified my acceptance of the appointment.

I was soon busy getting my outfit for my post, which included furniture, wines, and other necessities of life, as well as guns and saddlery.

I was then commanded to Balmoral to kiss hands, and almost immediately after this visit of ceremony I set sail once again for South America. I broke my journey at Santiago, where I had the pleasure of meeting my old Chilean friends. During my stay I bought myself a couple of horses, a black cob, and a half-bred mare, aged five. The black proved a useful slave and nothing

more, but the mare turned out a first-class animal, a beautiful ride, and as hard and enduring as a mule. Like many a good horse, however, her temper was none of the best, and at times, when above herself, she took a bit of riding.

From Santiago I went on to Lima, and thence to La Paz by the route which I have already described.

About forty years previous to my appointment as minister in La Paz the British Government of that day had broken off relations with Bolivia as a result of the discourteous treatment accorded to Mr. Matthews, our Chargé d'Affaires at Sucre, which was at that time the capital of the Republic.

There were many versions current as to what had actually occurred. The popular one was that Matthews had, in some way or other, offended Melgarejo, who was then the despotic ruler of the Republic, and that the latter had ordered him to be stripped naked, seated on a donkey, and then led thrice round the square, after which he was conducted to the frontier to make his way home to England as best he could.

It was further said that Lord Palmerston who was then Foreign Secretary, incensed at this barbarous treatment of our representative, had not only broken off relations with the Republic, but had cut it out of a map of South America which hung in his room in the Foreign Office, and that when the Bolivian minister in London called to attempt to offer explanations he had pointed out the gap to this astonished functionary.

The whole story became a standing joke in diplomatic circles, but, fortunately for South American culture, there is but little truth in it, the real facts of the case, as far as I was able to ascertain them, being far less sensational, and, in fact, rather humdrum. Perhaps in the interests of truth I may give the correct version.

It appears that our Chargé d'Affaires in Sucre had in his employ a native servant whom the Bolivian Government believed to be concerned in a revolutionary movement intended to encompass their overthrow. They asked Matthews to dismiss the man, but this he refused to do, and after some desultory conversation on both sides the Foreign Minister invited the diplomat to leave the country, and, as Sucre then boasted no railways, the President sent him a mule from his stables to expedite his departure.

After the relations between the two countries had remained severed for a number of years they were finally renewed, though Great Britain did not retain a resident diplomat in La Paz, but accredited her minister in Lima to act in a similar capacity to the Government of Bolivia.

My appointment as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister

Plenipotentiary to reside at La Paz thus signified the end of an old dispute, and was a popular one, and on my leaving the hotel for the house which I had leased, the ladies of the capital vied with each other in their efforts to deck the new Legation from top to bottom with flowers of every hue and variety. Some of these were from the gardens in the vicinity of La Paz, but many, not content with this offering, sent Indian runners down into the tropical lands, who returned laden with orchids, lilies, passion-flowers, and tuberoses which they carried wrapt in the hollow stems of bamboos to protect them from the cold of the highlands.

The Legation was an old house of the colonial period, situated in a narrow and rather mean street ; but I preferred its old-world dignity to the modern and rather tasteless villas in which some of my colleagues resided.

During the first year of my residence at my post I was busy conducting negotiations for a commercial treaty, which I finally signed, between Great Britain and Bolivia. This matter disposed of I was free to get away into the interior on my horse for a few days at a time, and to breathe freely again after descending some four or five thousand feet into the warm valleys below. A place called Villa Florida on the road to Yungas was my favourite resort. Leaving La Paz early in the morning one climbs over a desolate arctic-looking country with an elevation of some fifteen thousand feet. The mountain streams are frozen into gigantic icicles, hanging in the rocks, and hailstorms usually greet the traveller over this road. Horses as well as human beings are frequently attacked by the dreaded *soroche*, or mountain sickness. On one such occasion my Chilean mare, after gallantly breasting a steep ascent, dropped in her tracks and lay gasping with dilated nostrils, fighting for her breath. She appeared, indeed, to be dying, for her ears were quite cold, and my situation was not an enviable one in this bleak spot, where, when night came on, I had a very good chance of being snowed up and frozen to death. I was just about to bleed my mare as a last resource when a *Puno* Indian came by. Holding out a silver dollar in my hand I told him he should have it if he cured my mare. The man nodded, searched in the knitted bag which the Indians always carry attached to their girdle, and presently extracted a small garlic bean, which he laid in the upturned and heaving nostril of the animal. In a minute or two, as if by magic, the convulsive efforts ceased, and after breathing naturally for a few times the mare struggled to her feet, apparently sound and well again. I handed the Indian the dollar which he had so well earned, and mounting the mare continued my journey. About five miles

from where this incident had occurred the broad cart-road comes to an end and a narrow path offers a steep and precipitous descent. Proceeding along it for a distance of about two hours one again strikes a broader thoroughfare, which is an old Inca road leading to the Yungas. This is one of the most fertile districts in Bolivia, where some of the world's best coffee is grown, the berry being of very small size, but aromatic and fragrant to an extraordinary degree. The cold and forbidding country of the *Puno* has vanished in the space of a couple of hours' ride, and in its place is a semi-tropical vegetation. Ferns and masses of wild cyclamen line the road on either side, while parrots fly screaming to and fro, their plumage, as it catches the rays of the sun, flashing like emeralds. The soft air is heavily scented with orange-blossom—*azahar*, as it is called by the Spaniards, a soft word which they themselves learnt from the Moors. It is the most wonderful transformation scene in the world.

Another favourite trip of mine was to take the train to Guaqui, the Bolivian port on Lake Titicaca, and there to pack my gun and cartridges, a small tent, and some food on the back of a donkey, and walk to a spot on the River Desaguadero, called Anguaqui, where there was perhaps the finest duck-shooting in the world. There were mallard, widgeon, teal, flamingoes, cinnamon-duck, snipe, and golden plover literally in thousands. Sometimes I went alone, but more often with a friend who was employed on one of the extension railroads, and who afterwards fell in the Great War. It was a pleasant walk from Guaqui to the shooting-grounds, the country being watered by a delightful stream, the banks of which were frequented by a species of dove which was new to me. These tiny creatures, which were only the size of sparrows, had a plumage similar to that of the wild dove, except that in the centre of their wings the feathers were bright golden in colour. They were sporting little birds, getting up off the ground with a diminutive whirr like that of a partridge, and no doubt good eating, but they were, I thought, much too pretty to shoot. The Indians of the neighbourhood were reputed hostile, but I never had any trouble or contact with them.

Legend has it that they still mourn for the Incas, for the native homespun clothes of both men and women are dyed a sombre black. Not an ill-looking people, hardworking and industrious, their only wish is to be left in peace to garner their hard-won crops. As with other Indians, their curse is fire-water, and when under its influence they are quarrelsome and apt to fall out with the authorities. Then there is usually a shedding of blood before peace is restored.



SPORT ON LAKE TITICACA (BOLIVIA)



It was always bitterly cold at my camping ground on the Desaguadero, for the altitude was upwards of fourteen thousand feet, so a supply of thick rugs was essential. One night I and my companion each placed a pannikin of tea near our pillows, and, waking up thirsty some hours later, reached out for our drink. In the darkness we put the pannikins to our lips, but as no liquid wetted them we accused each other of drinking the tea, and it was only by lighting a candle that we discovered that the contents of the mugs was frozen stiff and transformed into a lump of ice in the mug. The inhabitants of the banks of the Desaguadero River are the Uro Indians, a race about which very little is known, except that their original home was in the tropical parts of Bolivia. Under what conditions and for what reason they left it for the bleak, inhospitable *Puno* is a complete mystery to scientists. Though their language is similar, they are different in appearance and customs to the sullen Aymarás, and are a friendly, cheerful folk, earning a precarious living by husbandry and fishing. Their food consists mainly of fish and the quantities of eggs laid by wild fowl on the marshy banks of the river. I and my friend were always received by them in a most friendly manner on arrival, for we not only hired two or three of them with their strange canoes, but invariably gave them what was over from our stores when we left. These canoes are most ingeniously made of the tall reeds which grow along the banks of the river, and are known in their language as *piri*; the root of this reed is also used by them as food. The prow and stem of the canoes are high and pointed, something like the Viking ships, but the general appearance of these craft is Eastern. They are so light that a man can carry them, but they will, nevertheless, hold two persons comfortably, and even stand a certain amount of rough weather. For fishing and everyday work they are propelled by a long, light pole, and it is a remarkable fact that the Uros obtain these poles from the tropical regions of Bolivia, for no such wood grows on the desolate *Puno*, but how they get them I was never able to ascertain. For longer journeys they hoist a sail on their canoes, which is also made of the *piri* reed, and thus equipped they often travel long distances, even coasting along the shores of the great inland sea of Titicaca itself.

For shooting, my friend and myself would each hire a couple of these canoes, in one of which we sat—somewhat precariously—while the other craft, vigorously propelled by an Indian through the thick rushes, acted as beater and retriever. Amongst the larger birds found were the flamingo, the Andean goose, and a duck, similar to a mallard, but about twice its size. Our mixed bag for a couple of days, taking usually only the more sporting

shots, used to be between two and three hundred birds, and my friends in La Paz used to say that on my return every street in the town was redolent of roast wild duck.

The Uros were the only Indian tribe of the *Puno* with whom I managed to establish friendly relations, and it is a matter of regret to me that I never succeeded in ascertaining the history of their origin, which would be of real value to science. I trust that they may continue to live for long, undisturbed by the progress of civilization, on the banks of their mysterious and little-known river.

In addition to the sport which I have described I had an occasional day in the high mountains after bear and vicuña. Of the former I only saw one, an easy shot, but my rifle was not to hand, and after allowing me to observe him from a distance of about one hundred yards, Bruin walked slowly away. The Andean bear is black with a white patch on its chest, and of a good size, though smaller, I should think, than the grizzly. They do not appear to be savage, and I never heard of anyone being attacked by them.

One day my friend on the railway invited me to join him for a vicuña hunt. Leaving La Paz by train in the morning, I arrived at his camp that afternoon, when he told me that he had arranged for a hand-worked railway trolley to take us up the line on the following day to an altitude of some sixteen thousand feet. After discussing our plans, I suggested a stroll before dinner, and having walked a couple of miles we turned back to camp with a keen appetite which the cold, bracing air had given us. When only a few minutes away from the house I saw an apparently rare specimen of skunk, which I determined to secure. It was a beautiful beast, perhaps a little larger than the ordinary species, and snowy white in colour, with a black head. My companion shared my keenness to capture it—alive if possible—the plan being to envelope it in one of our ponchos and then carry it off bodily, for we had no fire-arms or even sticks. But we reckoned without the skunk's power of defence, for when we got within about six feet of it the wily animal let off a jet of the most appalling stink-gas which can be conceived. Wavering myself and seeing my companion hesitate amid those awful fumes, I shouted, "Come on—be a man; don't let this wretched animal beat us," and with that we moved a step or two nearer. But the stench was humanly unbearable and we broke and ran, never stopping till we reached the home-camp, where, before we could go indoors, we had to strip ourselves naked, leaving our clothes to fumigate outside. Then we entered and washed our bodies all over, but still we tasted the awful smell, and it was only after

several strong cocktails that we felt at all disposed to sit down to dinner. That skunk must have laughed at us.

We set forth on the following morning in the hand-car, and when we arrived at what seemed to be suitable ground for vicuña, we got out and went in search of our game. It was by no means easy work, at an altitude of about sixteen thousand feet, climbing up rocks and peeping over the edge of a cliff into a gully below, where perhaps one might see one or more small animals, about the size of a roe deer, but golden in colour, galloping away like mad. With a heart thumping like a sledgehammer and lungs fit to burst one took the best aim possible and prayed for luck, which did not, however, come my way. My companion, younger and more agile than I, secured two vicuñas, and I finally fluked another. Vicuña have a beautiful fleece, golden in colour, and though light as feather extraordinarily warm. The meat is edible but of poor quality, tasting something like indifferent venison. They are of the same family as the camel and allied to the llama and the guanaco. Having loaded our trophies on the hand-car we started to return, travelling with considerable rapidity down a very steep gradient over the lines which had recently been laid. After a while the pace suddenly increased to a dangerous degree, and my companion said, "The brake is smashed, and I'm afraid we're in for it," adding, "I do hate this sort of thing." He was a cool fellow and I shared his dislike, for there was a drop of several thousand feet to the left of us, while from the mountain to the right stones came rumbling down, threatening to throw the car off the lines into the abyss below. Just as this seemed imminent a workman, a Chilean, had the happy thought of braking one of the wheels with the handle of an axe. This somewhat checked our velocity and enabled us to safely negotiate a dangerous corner, after which the worst was over and, still braking with the aid of the axe handle, we succeeded in reaching our camp and bringing the vehicle to a standstill.

To anyone addicted to mountain climbing a residence in La Paz certainly offered every scope for this form of sport, but there was no one amongst the foreign colony in the city who seemed keen, perhaps because living at an altitude of twelve thousand feet does not inspire one with any particular ambition to go any higher. I felt, however, that life would be incomplete without some experience of the kind, and one evening a German friend and I agreed to attempt the conquest of the peak called Kaka, which stands a few miles away from the Alto of La Paz. We did not know its exact height, but it is believed to be eighteen thousand feet, which is borne out by the snow which it carries.

We left my house on foot the following morning, and after a

preliminary pull up to the Alto, which is fairly steep, we walked for another three hours to the base of Kaka, where we had a light meal of sandwiches and a drink of cold tea, and then commenced our climb. After about two hours we came to deep snow, but it was hard and bore well and though the pull up was stiff, we met with no special difficulties. The scenery was remarkable for its grandeur and melancholy. As far as the eye could reach one saw nothing but ice and snow, and one could easily imagine oneself in the Arctic regions. Sign of life there was none, not a beast or bird or tree or shrub or even a blade of grass. My quick thought as I surveyed the outlook was that if a man were lost here he would soon go mad.

My companion was active and agile, and feeling the depth of the snow here and there, we pressed on at a very creditable pace. We suffered no ill effects from the rarity of the air, and I for my part felt braced and exhilarated by the sharp dryness of the atmosphere. The day was bright and sunny but the thermometer must have registered over ten degrees Réaumur. As we neared the summit a strong wind was blowing, and at intervals heavy masses of snow and ice became detached and tumbled off the side of the mountain. This was the danger-point of our ascent, and it was only by cool and accurate observation that we succeeded in avoiding these falling masses. We pressed on, nevertheless, at a good pace and eventually reached the summit, which commanded a superb view of the Andean Cordillera in all its majesty. I carried a prickly pear in my pocket and nothing ever tasted so good as this juicy, savoury fruit, the pulp of which has the peculiar property of always remaining cool. The descent was easy, sliding and sometimes running over the deep snow, but by the time we reached my house in La Paz, at about 4 p.m., we were two very exhausted men, and as we subsided into comfortable arm-chairs I had just the strength to tell my servant to bring two large whiskies and sodas. It seemed an age before he returned with the tall glasses filled to the brim with the cool, inviting, sparkling drink, which speedily put new life into us.

This was my only experience of mountaineering, and I don't think I ever want to try it again, for although there are people who like walking, I don't.

I had now spent two consecutive years in La Paz and was entitled to long leave, of which I now decided to take advantage and to proceed home.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BLACK GOLD

WHEN I arrived in England the result of Casement's report on conditions in the Putumayo had created a great stir among the public, and there was even a disposition to criticize our officials abroad for not having called attention to the ill-treatment of the Indian races in the districts where wild rubber was worked. As, therefore, there existed in Bolivia a vast tract known as the Beni, where wild rubber was worked with native Indian labour, I decided to visit this district and obtain what information I could on the subject. Though the Foreign Office accepted my offer to make this journey they refused me any grant of money for expenses, and as my scheme of travel was an ambitious one I was obliged to cut down the costs to the very minimum. My kit was, therefore, restricted, and consisted of the following: one twelve-bore gun and one large-bore sporting magazine rifle, with a sufficient supply of ammunition for both these weapons; a saddle, bridle, and blanket; a very light portable tent, rolling up like an umbrella; a couple of stout knives and a revolver; a supply of aspirin, quinine, and laudanum; one presentable blue suit, two white suits, a pair of thin corduroy riding breeches, two suits of pyjamas, a pair of riding boots and spurs, and two pairs of canvas shoes. I calculated that this would be sufficient for the trip, which I estimated would last over some eight months, and that I could, if necessary, replenish my store at any South American town through which I passed.

These preparations completed, I left England on the 13th of May, 1913, a combination of dates which was not particularly auspicious. I must confess to being superstitious about the number 13, which is the date of my birth and has pursued me through life. Do what I will I can never avoid it, and as sure as I make plans for any journey, even a trivial one, something always happens to force me to either start or arrive on that date.

I had with me two Airedale terriers, which, I had been told, were the most suitable dogs for my purpose, and the ones most likely to stand the effects of the climate and hardships which lay before me.

My ship was one of the largest vessels of the Booth Line, a comfortable boat and better adapted to hot weather in the tropics than any other on which I had ever travelled. She carried but

few passengers, for which I was not sorry, as it gave me time to read and think out the plans of my journey. The butcher, as is customary on shipboard, took care of my dogs, whose tempers were none of the best, and on more than one occasion I had to apply palm oil to members of the crew who had been bitten by them.

After a wholly uneventful voyage we reached Pará on the 29th of May, and remained there for three days, which I occupied in wandering about the old town with its attractive houses and courtyard gardens, in which every variety of tropical flower and plant may be seen. Pará has also an interesting zoological garden, with a first-rate collection of South American fauna and reptiles. Here I spent many pleasant hours, admiring the jaguars, pumas, and, above all, a magnificent specimen of the black panther. Being in captivity in their own country and climate these animals retained the brilliance and glossiness of coat which is peculiar to them in their wild state. The snakes, too, interested me greatly, and I saw many specimens, poisonous and otherwise, which I had already met with on my travels.

My steamer sailed on the 3rd of June and landed me at Manaus three days later. Here I transhipped to the Amazon Company's river boat, which was sailing that evening for Porto Velho. Before leaving, various members of the British colony in Manaus came on board to call on me, for the report of the adventurous journey I was about to undertake had got abroad and excited considerable interest. Amongst my visitors was H.M. Consular representative in Manaus, who told me an amusing story of an electric eel which he kept in a small tank in his garden. Shortly before my arrival a British gunboat had steamed up to Manaus, and a party of bluejackets called at the Consulate for papers and letters. The Consul showed them his prize and offered a bottle of iced beer—a tempting drink in that climate—to any man who could keep his hands in the tank for a minute by the watch. All tried and failed, receiving a severe shock, which quickly made them remove their hands from the electrified water and indulge in a flow of sailor-like language. But they had their beer all the same. The electric eel inhabits the waters of the Amazon and its tributaries, and is, I was subsequently told by the Indians, a frequent danger to swimmers, whose limbs they paralyse by charging the water with electricity. I was sorry that I did not have an opportunity of inspecting the Consul's specimen at Manaus, for on my subsequent journey I never came across one, though they were no doubt plentiful enough in the waters which I alternatively navigated and swam. The remainder of my callers had nothing very interesting to relate, though they were

good enough to express the belief that I should never reach the end of my journey alive ; but I consoled myself with the thought that they were merely town dwellers, who had probably never been more than ten miles out of Manaos. My previous experience of travel in the wilder parts of South America made me optimistic as to the journey which lay before me, the difficulties of which, as I was to learn later, I had considerably underestimated.

My boat was comfortable enough though somewhat overcrowded with a number of Brazilian coloured men, who were travelling first class and had their meals with us in the saloon, for in Brazil there is no colour line, and in the remoter parts of the country the negro races and their offshoots greatly outnumber the whites.

Apart from a not unnatural prejudice, however, I found my fellow-passengers not without culture, in spite of their dark skins, and only too glad to impart to me a fund of interesting information about the country through which we were passing.

The scenery on this part of the Amazon is not impressive. The river, which is of great breadth, was of a dirty yellowish colour, with swampy banks on either side, down to which the jungle crept. Here and there were clearings made by an occasional half-caste Brazilian squatter or fisherman. For the rest, as I was informed by the captain of the vessel, who had been in this trade all his life, the forest was in the undisturbed possession of a tribe of fierce and unconquerable Indians, called the Tirintintins. The captain also told me that, some years previously, he formed one of a party who were engaged in exploring some of this territory in search of rubber, and that, coming down a creek in their canoes, they caught sight of an Indian woman leading a young child, aged about six, by the hand. One of the party fired and the woman dropped dead, and her slayer, stepping on shore, picked up the child and carried it to the canoe. As he released his burden it was seen that the man was bleeding from a wound in the shoulder where the Indian child had bitten him to the bone. I told the captain I admired the child.

In all parts of South America where wild Indians are found there exist relentless feuds between them and the mixed native and Spanish races, and shooting each other at sight is still the order of the day, as it was, we must in justice remember, in North America and in Australia in the days of the early settlers in those countries. In recent times, however, the Brazilian Government has made praiseworthy efforts for the pacification of the Indian tribes, and for this work they have been fortunate in procuring the services of Colonel Roldan, a distinguished soldier and traveller, who has devoted his whole life to the cause

of the wild man, and has in many cases succeeded in establishing friendly relations with them.

But the Indian question will always be a difficult problem, for the wild men don't wish to be civilized or to work for others. What they do want is to be free to roam the vast forest at their will, to hunt and fish as the humour takes them, and this civilization does not allow.

My steamer reached Porto Velho on the 14th of June, and I disembarked, happy in the thought that I was now in the heart of a vast, unexplored country and that my adventure lay before me.

The small town of Porto Velho is the head-quarters of the Madeira-Mamoré Railway, a line originally projected in 1858 by Colonel Church, an American, whose attempt at its construction proved a failure, owing to the fact that the majority of workmen died of fever or were killed by the Indians. In 1905 the construction of the railway was taken over by a European syndicate, and in 1912, in spite of the mortality amongst the workmen, which is assessed at five thousand, it was finished to Guajara Merim, a small township on the Beni.

Porto Velho was to me one of the surprises of my life. I expected discomfort of every kind and a thorough lack of hygiene, and found the exact opposite. On my arrival I was met by the manager of the company, who very kindly offered me the hospitality of his house during my stay. Like every dwelling in this model township it was enclosed in wire netting with double doors opening *outwards* and not *inwards*, for here an everlasting war is waged against the mosquito, that scourge of the tropics. The house itself was cool and wholesome, and there were none of the drawbacks usually attendant on life in the tropics. Outside the same care for health was manifested; no pools of stagnant water were allowed, water was boiled in huge tanks every day for the use of the entire population, American and native, and well-tended gardens supplied an abundance of fresh fruit and vegetables daily. As a result of these sensible measures there was no sickness at all in Porto Velho, but along the line, malaria, black-water fever, and the dreaded beriberi were unpleasantly frequent, while the Brazilian town of San Antonio, distant a few miles, away was a perfect plague centre and bore the reputation of being the unhealthiest spot in South America.

The day following my arrival I was taken by my host to visit the company's hospital, which is under the care of American doctors who have made a special study of tropical diseases. There is a trained staff of lady nurses, who were also Americans. The first thing that struck me was the peculiar lowness of the

steps leading up to the hospital, and asking the reason of this I was told that this was specially so constructed for the use of patients suffering from beriberi, the effect of which is to make them incapable of lifting their feet more than a few inches from the ground. I was much impressed by the admirable up-to-date manner in which the hospital was run. There were patients of all nationalities, Brazilians, Americans, Hindoos, Greeks, and Indians, and all received the same treatment, irrespective of colour and social standing. The worst to look at among the patients were those suffering from malaria—cadaverous creatures, looking like ghosts of humanity, their faces the colour of lemons, and nearly all the life burnt out of their bodies by this horrible disease. The convalescents were all occupied in filling capsules with quinine, a ton of this drug being, as the doctors told me, annually used by the company.

An interesting inmate of the hospital was a Caripuna Indian, whom the doctors had christened "Pete." He had been found by some of the railway workers lying under a heavy tree, which had fallen on him, crushing both his legs, which had to be amputated above the knee the day after he was brought in. The Caripunas are a wild tribe of Indians inhabiting this district, but Pete seemed to have taken kindly to civilization and struck me as the happiest inmate of the hospital. I was introduced to him as "the man with many rifles," and the poor fellow showed me with intense pride the artificial legs which the company had given him. I really believe that he valued them higher than the flesh and blood ones he had lost.

I felt Porto Velho on the following day much impressed by the administration of the Madeira-Mamoré Railway, and by the admirable sanitary and hygienic arrangements of the medical branch of the staff. We travelled in a comfortable motor rail car over the line to a place called Abuná, the manager and a Brazilian admiral, who was also studying local conditions, accompanying me. We reached Abuná in the evening of the same day, our only mishap being to run over an alligator which was asleep on the rails. Fortunately it was a small one, or the car might have been overturned. On the following morning we stopped at a rubber station and saw the rubber prepared by a new process, by which the sap is poured on to a metal drum which revolves over the smoke of the urucury nut drawn up through a funnel. It took eighteen minutes to produce a sheet sixty centimetres in length and forty in breadth. This system is said to be an improvement on the usual method of preparing rubber in *bolacha*—a large round ball—in which impurities may, and often are, concealed. I noticed that the workmen, who

were Brazilians and looked healthy enough, wore neat little hand-made rubber galoshes on their feet. They must be excellent footgear for stalking game. Continuing our journey, we arrived at Villa Murtinho, a Brazilian village on the River Beni, opposite which lies the Bolivian village of Villa Bella. From the latter a number of important personages had assembled to meet me, and I was afterwards entertained by them at a lunch given in my honour. On the conclusion of this feast the guests accompanied me to the steam launch which was to convey me to a spot called Cachuela Esperanza, which is the main export station of a well-known rubber company registered in London. As I boarded the launch my official flag was quickly hoisted at the main, and we shoved off amid cheers and loud cries of "*Viva el Ministro Ingles.*" At last I had left civilization behind, and for probably the first time in history the Union Jack floated out on the breeze over the waters of the River Beni.

I was now in the centre of the wild rubber-producing district of South America, a strange land of which but little is known in the outside world, for but few travellers are permitted to penetrate its secrets. The rubber trade here is in the hands of a few rich and powerful firms, who rule over districts of hundreds of square leagues, and exercise the power of life and death over the people committed to their care. They are often extremely wealthy, and their staff of managers and clerks, who are usually Europeans, are the most highly paid in the world. The latter are chosen from the few—the very few—who survive a temporary probation, for in this pestiferous land death is the great competitor of labour, and only exceptional constitutions can resist chronic malaria, to which must be added the danger of infection from black-water fever and the usually mortal disease of beriberi. It was not an uncommon thing in this land, at the time of my visit, for a European manager to receive a salary from eight to ten thousand pounds a year, together with a percentage on the profits, and his subordinates were paid in proportion; but in case any of my readers should be tempted by these figures, let me hasten to add that, in my opinion, no money could compensate for having to live in such a country, or to be concerned in the production of "black gold," which is the name by which rubber is generally known. The collecting and export of wild rubber is the only industry of the country, the small amount of food-stuffs grown being merely for the consumption of the labour required in its production. The method of its collection is simple: the trees which are found in the forest are tapped, the rubber sap is smoked over a specially prepared fire, and made into large balls, and is then ready for export.

When the trees are bled dry, others farther in the jungle are sought for. The system of labour by which these native rubber stations are run is of two kinds, namely, nominally free labour under the peonage system, and, to a much smaller extent, forced labour imposed on captured tribes or individuals of the wild Indian races. By the first, agents of the rubber-producers travel all over the civilized portions of Bolivia, and, under the offer of high wages, induce numbers of men and sometimes women and children to engage themselves for work in the *gomales* of the Beni at a relatively high wage, a portion of which is advanced to them. They are then marched in gangs to their destination, and on arrival are allowed a further credit at the stores which are run in connexion with the rubber station up to a total sum of one hundred pounds. This is their price in the market. Eagerly these childish and ignorant people purchase hats, guitars, ponchos, and liquor at exorbitant prices, leaving a load of debts around their necks from which they never can free themselves. Should they die, their wives or concubines must take over their debts, and after this their children. Should a peon escape he is tracked, and if recaptured, as is usually the case, for he cannot get very far in the impenetrable jungle of this wild and unexplored country, he is heavily flogged as a punishment and a warning to his companions. The usual sentence is two hundred lashes, but cases are reported when up to a thousand lashes have been given. This is, however, exceptional, for the punishment is not intended to kill, for the worker is far too valuable to lose.

In the case of forced labour of wild Indians, what usually occurs is as follows: A white man or a half-caste, hunting for game or rubber in the forest, catches a fleeting glance of the feathered head-dress of an Indian amidst the foliage, fires his rifle, and, being a good shot as these men almost invariably are, kills or wounds the Indian. The tribe then vows vengeance, and on the first opportunity falls on some travelling party of white men, and, taking them unawares, massacres the lot. The white men then organize what is called a *correria*, or Indian hunt, attacking their camps in the forest, when their able-bodied men are away hunting or fishing, killing the old men and women, and bringing back the boys and girls as slaves. Sometimes these hunts are undertaken by private individuals, who sell their captives at a fixed market rate.

These were the conditions at the time when I visited those regions in the year 1913, and I hope that, partly as a result of my visit, things have improved since that date. But the discovery and working of wild rubber has been a curse to the land ;

thousands of men have died from the effects of the pestilential climate ; thousands too have been drowned in the navigation of the dangerous rivers ; and thousands more will die, until the cultivated rubber of the Straits Settlements and other adjacent lands, where it is artificially grown, becomes so cheap as to oust the wild rubber from the market. Then the territories of the Beni and Colonias, having nothing else to produce that is within practicable distance of the sea, will revert to the control of the wild men, who will hunt once more, happy and undisturbed, in these vast, limitless forests.

After the festivities at Puerto Murtinho, which were somewhat trying in this torrid climate, it was a relief to find myself alone on a steam launch, heading for Cachuela Esperanza, or the " Whirlpool of Hope," as the name may be rendered in English. It is a curious name, but the place itself is in many respects stranger still. On leaving Puerto Murtinho, the River Beni presents a broad expanse of waters, but shallow in parts and with a swift-flowing current. Every now and then our little vessel edged close in to the right bank of the river, and here I was aïd to observe signs of animal life, for I was in a new country which is but little known to students of natural history. There was not, however, very much to be seen beyond a variety of amphibious tortoises, which lie on the roots of the trees overhanging the river and quickly dive into the water when the wash or the noise of our engines disturbed them. They are very attractive little creatures and quick in their movements, and, as I am told, excellent eating. Alligators were also to be seen, but not in great numbers or of large dimensions, for the current here is too swift for their liking. At one spot, when within a few yards of the bank, I saw a large jet-black snake from ten to twelve feet long. He was a dangerous-looking monster of a species new to me in South America, and closely resembled the South African mamba. Of bird-life in this particular district I saw precisely nothing.

The air on the water was comparatively cool, for a gentle breeze was blowing, but in spite of this we were plagued by the *baregui*, one of the many torments to the traveller in Amazonia. This is a species of sand fly with a painful sting which leaves a small black mark lasting for several days. They collect in a swarm around you, and as I found it quite impossible to protect myself from them I deemed it the wisest policy to give them plenty of space to feed, and always went about with my shirt open at the neck and my arms bare as, in this way, they didn't all bite in one place. While talking of this *baregui*, I may as well give an account of other blood-sucking insects which I was

to encounter on my journey, for they play an important part in the life of the traveller in these regions. On the water the *baregui* has, happily, no other rival than the mosquito, of which the worst kind, the anopheles—the distributor of malaria—only appears after sunset, so that, provided you have a mosquito-net, you can protect yourself from his attacks. But on land, in the forest jungle, the list of the tormentors of humanity is a much larger one, for there is the *apasanca*, a bird-eating spider attaining a length of from eight to ten inches, which has a highly poisonous bite that sometimes proves fatal. This creature, which is fond of sharing your blankets when your bed is on the ground, is of a most hideous aspect, in form round like a ball of wool, with thick, black hairs on its body and long, red ones on its legs. To add to the terror which it inspires, not only in birds but in human beings as well, it has a pair of quick-moving jet-black eyes, even more malevolent-looking, I think, than those of a snake. The *apasanca* is very quick and active in his movements, jumping a couple of feet at a single bound, and is certainly a most unpleasant bedfellow. Another highly poisonous beast is the *guanaco*, a bug which lives in the sand, in such places as one is always apt to make one's bed for the night, and his bite is painful and may be fatal. Ticks, of course, are common everywhere, but the worst are found in the forest, and are so small as to be almost invisible, until they begin to swell with the sucking of your blood. They cling in myriads to the leaves and branches of the trees, and as soon as they are disturbed by man or beast they fall on their prey. A small but very savage wasp is another insect danger of the forest, laying his nest in the trees, and, if disturbed, flying at your face and inflicting a sting which is painful for some hours. But perhaps the worst of them is the *palo santo* ant, a fire ant which lives in a hollow-stemmed tree, which is common in the jungle. The slightest touch on this tree in passing is sufficient to bring a number of these ants tumbling down on your neck and shoulders, and their bite feels like the burn of a red-hot coal, the pain lasting for hours. It is said that on the rubber stations Indians were punished by being tied naked to the *palo santo* tree, and that a few hours of this punishment will tame the most rebellious spirit. This, after my own experiences with the same, I can well believe. There are also *sweat bees*—large, noisy, troublesome things—which, though they do not sting, get into the hair of your head to suck your perspiration; *jiggers* which lay their eggs in your toes; the *boro*, which lays an egg on the spot where a mosquito has bitten you, and which presently hatches out into a large, yellow maggot, inflicting considerable pain before it can be extracted; the *zaputama*, an

almost invisible insect which lies in wait in the grass and gets on to your legs, causing an intolerable itching. This does not complete the list, but it gives an idea what the traveller in the Amazon valley has to put up with. His trials are, I am sure, greater than Job's ever were, and he needs all that philosopher's patience, and more.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE RUBBER RING

THE sun was setting over the broad expanse of water of the Beni when the steam launch came alongside the small wooden pier at Cachuela Esperanza, where the manager of the station and his subordinate awaited my arrival. The place consisted of a dozen or so palm-thatched houses, one of which was allotted to me as my quarters. It was a comfortable enough little place, with a bed and mosquito-net, and had, as well, the luxury of a tin bath, which I proceeded to enjoy, for I was hot and weary after the incessant biting of the *bareguis*. After this I was conducted to another hut where dinner was served to the manager, his subordinate, and myself. It was quite a good meal, consisting of soup, a fish from the river, and the inevitable sun-dried beef known as *charqui*, with rice. This is the staple dish in the rubber country, both for rich and poor, but *charqui* varies in quality. When fresh it is palatable and, I believe, even wholesome, but the inferior kind is often slightly decomposed, and I have seen maggots float up to the top of the water in which it is boiled.

I found my two hosts very silent, and though I made several attempts to start conversation on a variety of subjects their answers were monosyllabic. The manager was a middle-sized man, very spare of body, and his face was the colour of an over-ripe lemon. It was very difficult to judge his age, but I estimated it between forty and fifty. During dinner he passed each course without touching a morsel, but he drank copiously of a very excellent imported German beer which was served with the repast. I remarked on his want of appetite, and he replied somewhat curtly that he was suffering from a slight attack of fever. Poor wretch! One could not wonder at his unattractive demeanour, for it was obvious that his system was saturated through and through with malaria. Originally he must have been a strong man, and that is why he did not die after repeated attacks of the fever, but now all that was left was a mock of his former manhood. He had, he told me, been on and off for twenty years in this God-forsaken country. His companion was a young man of perhaps twenty-five, dark, with strikingly handsome features indicative of Jewish origin. He had been in the country for two years, and had as yet only suffered from slight attacks of the fever. I have always noticed that Europeans

of dark complexion are less liable to malaria and shake off its effects easier than the fair-haired, fair-skinned races of Northern Europe.

As soon as dinner was over we all three, by common consent, went to bed, and having made sure that my net was secure I lay down, thinking over my plans, while the screaming chorus of mosquitoes outside raged furiously at being deprived of this feast of fresh blood. A neat little Indian maid, dressed in the single garment called *tupoi* brought me the morning coffee and fresh, cool water for my bath, and after enjoying both I went out. The manager was not visible, and his subordinate had left for one of the stations in the interior, so I decided to take a stroll about the place. Cachuela Esperanza had a bad name, of that there was no doubt. It was said in the world outside, from which one seemed so completely cut off here in the land of "black gold," that natives had been barbarously ill-treated, and a German employee had been specially cited as concerned in these outrages. I was anxious to ascertain whether these reports were true or false, but it would only be possible to do so if I had complete liberty to go where I wished and see what I wanted. It did not seem at all certain, however, that this would be permitted.

There was not much to see in Cachuela: a collection of ranches fronting the river with the jungle as a background. It was the port for the exportation of the rubber down to Manaos, and the supply stations were farther inland. It was obvious that these alone could afford me the information which I sought, and I decided to suggest to the manager, whom I expected to meet at lunch, my desire to visit them. Meanwhile I strolled along the banks of the river, for there was nothing of any particular interest going on in the village. Here and there a few half-caste Bolivians, servants of the company, were engaged in their various duties, but the place seemed deserted and half dead. I commented on this during lunch to the manager, who told me that they had recently sent off a large consignment and that they would not be busy again until the next lot of rubber came down. My walk had given me an appetite and I made a good lunch, but my host, as on the previous day, did not touch his food, only taking beer, of which he drank three or four glasses. He looked in miserable health and complained of the attack of fever which was on him. I expressed the sympathy which I felt, and excused myself for disturbing him on business matters at a time when he was unwell. My time was, however, I told him, limited, and I should be glad, therefore, if he would at once arrange for me to visit the rubber-working station under his

control. I had the feeling that the manager had been expecting my request, for he replied quickly and with an energy that his previous conversation had lacked, that my request was an impossible one, that he had no means of transport ; moreover, that he himself had to leave shortly for down-river. I tried to persuade him, pointing out that I had been promised every facility for studying the conditions of the rubber trade ; but it was all to no effect, and I saw that the man was obdurate. I told him, therefore, that his refusal to facilitate my movements was regrettable in the interest of the rubber houses, and that nothing remained for me, therefore, but to proceed to Riberalta, where the principals of his business firm resided, and see whether they would be better disposed to assist me. The manager appeared to be relieved at my decision, and replied that the steam launch would be at my disposal for the journey whenever I pleased. It was clear then that, though the rivers were open to me, all access to the interior was closed. But I am not easily turned from my purpose when my mind is made up, and I determined to try another tack. So I thanked him and said I would leave on the following morning at 6 a.m., and then retired to my hut for a siesta. Later, when the sun was low, I put together my rod and tackle and went round to the falls in the river to have a try for a *dorado*. It was a most likely-looking place for a fish, but I did not get a single rise, and after persevering for a couple of hours I went back to my hut and changed my clothes for dinner. I was glad it was the last of these meals, for, as usual, the manager refused all food, and his only nourishment—if such it may be called—was his usual potation of German beer.

On the following morning I was down at the wharf betimes, eager to see what I believed to be the last of this accursed place. The voyage was uneventful and would have been a pleasant one had it not been for the swarms of *baregui* flies, which left me no peace. On nearing Riberalta, just before sunset, we passed a tract of land on which some Japanese settlers had planted manioc corn and pumpkins. They were working in their fields with their heads enveloped in mosquito-netting and surrounded by clouds of these insect pests, which they evidently found as unbearable as I did, and therefore used this method of protecting themselves. But the heat under the nets must have been terrific, and probably a white man could not have stood it.

I arrived at Riberalta shortly after and proceeded to the house of the firm to whom I had introductions, as no inn or other lodging was available. This was regrettable, but I was learning that the traveller in these regions is always dependent

on the powerful rubber combine, without whose goodwill and assistance it is difficult, if not impossible, to move. But I hoped to achieve the impossible. Riberalta is a small town of perhaps some two thousand inhabitants. It is looked upon as a comparatively healthy spot, and boasts of a hospital to which bad cases of malaria and beriberi are sent from the interior. Some of the convalescent patients were often to be seen strolling about in its vicinity, spectres of men, with the usual lemon-coloured faces and limbs so wasted that they could barely drag themselves about.

After a night's rest I set to work to discuss my travelling plans with the representative of the firm to which I carried letters of introduction, but I met again with the same wall of resistance as before. I was told that, as I had now seen and visited the rubber country of Bolivia, why did I not return by river to Manaos, and thence take ship in the ordinary way to Buenos Ayres, and so on to La Paz. Why risk my health unnecessarily in these insalubrious regions? On my protesting that I had seen nothing of the rubber country, I again met with the same excuses—lack of means of transport and no facilities for taking me there. Finally, when it was seen that I was determined to carry out my project, it was suggested that I should proceed from Riberalta by canoe up river to La Paz, a journey which was certainly likely to be interesting and adventurous, but which would not supply me with any of the information which I had come to find. I determined therefore to sleep over the question, and by next morning fixed my plans, which were as follows :

I heard that a small steam launch belonging to a firm which was known to me was expected to leave a spot called Guajara Merim, on the River Mamoré, for Trinidad, the capital of the department of the Beni. Thence I intended to proceed overland through the almost unknown Franciscan Missions of Guarayos, and from there to Santa Cruz, and so on to La Paz. By taking this route I would pass through a very considerable portion of the rubber area itself, while the latter part of my journey lay through that part of the country from which the greater part of the labour for the Beni was recruited. It had also this great advantage, that I should escape from the surveillance of the rubber ring, and be able to travel when and where I pleased. So far, then, my plan seemed to be a good one, but the difficulty was how to get to Guajara Merim, my immediate port of departure.

As a first step I resumed my discussion with my host, but I did not divulge the full scope of my plans, merely expressing the wish to see something of the River Mamoré. After some discussion it was agreed that my journey should be facilitated,

and a promise was eventually made that the manager at Cachuela Esperanza should be instructed to supply me with mules for the road to Guajara Merim. Well satisfied with this arrangement and with the prospect of regaining my independence, I went out for a stroll on the banks of the river for the purpose of getting up an appetite for dinner. A strong breeze was blowing off the water, and after walking for a mile or so I returned homewards, feeling refreshed and invigorated. As I was about to enter the house a gust of wind blew a piece of paper right to my feet. I should probably have taken no notice of it had I not, in a cursory glance, noticed that it was a printed sheet. Idly I picked up the paper, and in a moment my attention was engaged, for I saw that it was a valuable document which bore on the object of my journey. Putting it into my pocket, I went into dinner in high spirits, and with an excellent appetite. I slept soundly on my last night in Riberalta, and left the following morning for Cachuela Esperanza, where I arrived the same evening. The manager was still here and in much the same condition of health as when I left. I informed him of the promise made to me in Riberalta for mules to take me to Guajara Merim, and of the assurance which had also been given that he had been instructed in that sense. The manager muttered something to the effect that he did not know when the mules would be down, and that I might have to wait some days. By his looks and manner of speaking I felt that he had been ordered to obstruct rather than to assist my journey. So I was no better off than before, except in so far that my plans were made and that I was determined to carry them out at all costs.

Perhaps the manager realized this, for the next day I tackled him again about the mules, speaking very bluntly and plainly, and told him that if these were not available I should walk to Guajara Merim if necessary, leaving all my baggage behind. He saw that I really meant what I said, for finally, with a very bad grace, he agreed to give me six Indian carriers for my baggage. I asked him to call the men up and give them their orders before me, adding that I was leaving the next day at dawn. This he did, and I saw that clear orders were given as to my start on the following day. Dinner that evening was even more silent than usual, but with the immediate certainty of leaving Cachuela the customary sight of this melancholy man refusing his food and nourishing himself solely with beer no longer repelled me.

The next morning at dawn my bearers, six in number, duly mustered before my hut, and, loading up my scanty belongings, which included a supply of *charqui*, rice, and coffee for the journey, we stepped into the forest and in a few moments were immersed

in its depths. The *picada* path was a good one, having, I presume, been made by the rubber gatherers ; the day was fine, tempered by a cool breeze, and an absence of the *baregui* flies made it possible to enjoy life again. We camped that evening on the banks of the River Yata, a good-sized stream, and having slung my hammock and mosquito-net between two trees, after a short while I fell asleep. In a couple of hours I was awakened by the pain of violent stings. I lit my candle and found that a colony of red ants had walked along the rope supporting my hammock, and after feasting off a portion of my rubber bag had invaded my couch. Calling a couple of men, I descended gingerly with my bare feet, for it was dark, the Indians removed my hammock to another spot which proved free from ants, and though the anticipation of another attack prevented my sleeping soundly I rested undisturbed till dawn.

Preparations were now made for passing my luggage over the River Yata by means of a *pelota*, or bullock skin, a method which I have already described in another chapter. The Indians stripped for the work, and I noticed that the back of one of them was heavily scarred, as if from a severe flogging. I asked him how he came by these, but he was a Chiquitas man, and I could with difficulty understand his dialect. Anyhow, he was probably too frightened to tell me the truth, and it is more than possible that his punishment was well deserved. In dealing with Indians and half-castes flogging is often necessary, and if administered without undue severity is, in my opinion, far more humane than imprisonment under unhygienic conditions. As soon as I had seen my luggage safely conveyed to the opposite side I jumped into the river, which was only a couple of hundred yards broad, and swam across, followed by my two Airedale terriers. Fortunately there was sufficient current to minimize the danger from alligators, but the dogs, I think, knew from instinct that the waters were not safe, and kept close to my shoulders all the while. This was not very pleasant for me, but I could hardly blame them for it. Alligators are extremely partial to dogs, whose barking or whining near a river will cause them to lift their heads out of the water in anticipation of a meal.

Once over the Yata I set off at good speed ahead of my bearers, as I hoped to reach Guajara Merim that evening. I carried my rifle slung over my shoulder, together with a small supply of ammunition and some biscuits, which were to serve for my midday meal. The track was well marked, and I knew I could not miss it ; yet the feeling of being alone in the great jungle forest of South America is one which has always filled me with a sensation of awe, bordering on actual fear. The reason

for this sensation is, I think, due to the relentless struggle for existence which is constantly enacted before one's eyes ; for here nature is seen under her most cruel aspect. The great beasts of the jungle prey on the lesser animals, while the hordes of insects of all kinds, no less ferocious than the jaguar or the puma, are perpetually at warfare with all form of life. The same struggle is seen in the vegetable kingdom. Yon giant of the forest, whose massive trunk could not be spanned by two men holding hands, is firmly in the deadly grip of the liana, and in its sinuous embrace will presently wither away, to make room for the sapling which is springing up nearby. Side by side with all this wonder and luxuriance of tropical life death and decay are everywhere at hand.

Pondering over these matters, I marched along briskly followed by my two dogs, Jock and Cæsar. I had been advised by an expert in dogs in England that Airedales would be more likely to survive the climatic conditions and hardships of the road than any other breed, and I had great hopes of these two well-bred but sturdy animals, who had so far stood the journey admirably. I was, however, surprised to find that, from the moment of leaving Cachuela Esperanza and entering the forest the good spirits which the dogs had hitherto enjoyed completely left them. They evinced not the slightest desire to hunt, though exquisite scents of, to them, unknown wild animals must have tempted their nostrils at almost every step. They followed close to my heels, and I could not help thinking that, like their master, they too feared the mystery of the great forest.

As is often the case, even in the wildest parts of South America, I had seen no game whatever since starting, and was beginning to wonder whether I would not wait for the bearers and give one of them my rifle to carry, when something unusual in the appearance of a low-lying bush immediately to my right attracted my attention. Looking, I saw that a large snake was coiled upon it, and that its head stretched out halfway across the path. It was a small python, perhaps twelve or fourteen feet long, dark-coloured on the back, while its belly was a dirty pink. The snake was a couple of yards away from me, and I observed it closely, even keeping my eyes fixed on it for a moment in order to test the alleged magnetic power of these reptiles. It was certainly a repulsive-looking creature and was large enough to be dangerous, so I had no hesitation in firing at it. My bullet, however, merely passed through its side without breaking the spine, and after coiling itself convulsively for a second or two the python glided quickly into the jungle. While this incident occurred my two Airedales remained close at my heels, not

showing the least interest at the report of the rifle, while I doubt if they even saw the snake. They seemed to be absolutely cowed.

At about half-past three in the afternoon I came to a deep creek about a dozen yards in breadth. These still backwaters of the main rivers are not uncommon in this low-lying country, and are dangerous to cross, for their murky waters are not only the home of alligators but of dangerous fish, such as the *piraña*, the stinging ray, and the electric eel. This was a particularly uninviting place, for the waters were stained a deep black colour by the accumulation of dead leaves fallen from the trees ; moreover, on the opposite bank, just at the landing place, two dark-looking, half-submerged objects were partly visible. I picked up a piece of stick and threw it at the one ; it did not move, and further examination showed it was a sunken log. I threw another piece of stick at the second object, which then slowly sank, disappearing from sight. It was an alligator.

The more one looked at it the less inviting did this turgid black stream appear, and deeming prudence the better part of valour I decided to wait for my carriers to come up. No sooner was I seated on a fallen stump of tree, however, than a swarm of mosquitoes settled on me and covered my face, hands, and arms. Maddened by their bites I quickly decided to risk the alligator, and placing some papers and a small pocket edition of Edwin Arnold's poems in my hat, I plunged into the black waters of the *arroyo*, closely followed by my faithful but useless hounds. With my rifle slung over my shoulders and a belt containing some fifty English gold sovereigns round my middle, I carried more dead weight than I had calculated, and for a brief but unforgettable moment the black waters closed over my head. I recovered myself, however, and with half a dozen mighty strokes reached the opposite shore, still closely followed by the dogs. Wet to the skin and with my flesh creeping at the thought of the noxious creatures this pool might, and probably did, contain, I started off again at a rapid pace, and coming round a bend in the forest I spied for the first time the broad waters of the River Mamoré. This gave me the hope that my destination was not far away, and I hurried on anxious to reach shelter. I was, however, again delayed by another back-water, but fortunately found a canoe chained to the bank, which I succeeded after some difficulty in loosening, and with the aid of a bough, for there was no paddle, made my way to the opposite bank. A few steps farther brought me, just as the sun was beginning to set, into a straggling village, and I inquired of the first person I met my way to the house of a Dane to whom I carried a letter of introduction. He pointed to a mud hut a short distance

away, and in a few moments I was knocking at the door. A tall, pale-faced man appeared in answer to my summons and asked me what I wanted. In reply I handed him my letter, which was from the head of the business firm which he represented, and which requested him to afford all possible assistance to "His Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Bolivia." He read it slowly, and then looking at me, wet, bedraggled, and mud-stained as I stood before him, said, "But where is the minister?" "I am he," I replied, "and cold and much in need of a drink." On hearing this the Dane's suspicions vanished, and he took me into his room, dressed me out in a shirt, duck trousers, and a pair of slippers, all of which were much too large for me, and then poured me out a stiff glass of white rum, which I drank eagerly, for I was chilled to the bone. After this we sat down to an evening meal, and as we were finishing it my carriers arrived with my baggage safe and sound. My bed for that night was assuredly no couch of luxury, but with my mosquito-net securely fastened I slept sound after my march through the forest.

Guajara Merim is a village on the Bolivian side of the River Mamoré, and lies opposite the rail-head of the Madeira-Mamoré Railway, which is in Brazilian territory. It is without exception the dirtiest place which it has ever been my misfortune to visit during the course of my travels in Latin America, and consists of a number of mud huts lying on swampy ground, which is the undisturbed breeding-place of the anopheles mosquitoes and of a variety of other blood-sucking insects. This swamp also served as a rubbish heap for the bodies of a number of cows and donkeys which lay there, in an advanced stage of decomposition, poisoning the air for miles around. My launch was not due for three days, so I had to kill time as best I could, lying in bed most of the day, reading the very few books and papers which my Danish host had in his possession. At last the news reached me that the "Chimoré" had arrived, and I hastened on board with my luggage and dogs, glad to be off, and as I hoped, to escape the dread diseases which haunt this melancholy and depressing land.

The accommodation of the launch was not of a luxurious nature. The captain, engineer, and myself slung our hammocks on a small space available on the top deck, which was, however, too close to the boilers to be pleasant in this torrid clime. We were, however, fortunately well away from the lower deck, which was crowded with Brazilian and Bolivian rubber workmen and presented an indescribable medley of squalor and dirt. Among the passengers was a young Indian girl of considerable beauty, who was evidently the property of a *cauchero* who was travelling

with her. I learnt that she was from the Indian village of Baures, which was once famous for the beauty of its women, but is now almost completely depopulated. Baures is on a tributary of the Mamoré, and was on our route. This girl, who was the only Indian I have ever seen who could truthfully be described as beautiful, would sit on deck all day, gazing into the forest land beyond the river, thinking no doubt of the happy days when she was free to roam at will in their shady depths. Her companion rarely spoke to her, but it was obvious that he held her under close surveillance. After travelling for two days we stopped at a tributary of the Mamoré, and here a canoe, paddled by a white man, a wild-looking fellow with long black hair hanging over his shoulders and a scarlet handkerchief knotted round his swarthy neck, came alongside our vessel. Presently the Indian girl and her master climbed down into the canoe, which quickly pushed off, the white man paddling with powerful strokes, as if he were in a hurry to reach home. It was a strange scene. The sun was setting on the broad expanse of water and on the unknown and unexplored land beyond. I watched the girl's face as she stepped into the canoe, and it was full of sadness, and I continued to watch until the canoe became a tiny speck on the distant water.

I messed with the captain and the engineer, our food consisting of the inevitable *charqui*—of a rather odoriferous variety—and rice. As, however, we halted every day, usually at about 11 a.m., to load wood for our furnaces, I employed this time in looking about for food with my gun and rifle, and succeeded in bagging several wild turkeys, ducks, and an occasional pig or deer, all of which provided our larder with an agreeable and wholesome change of food. The most common turkey is that known as the *pavo campanilla*, a medium-sized bird with a good deal of white about its head and neck, which is excellent eating. Another variety is the *mytu*, a magnificent big creature with a rich black plumage, soft and fluffy like a woman's dress, and a splendid golden comb on its head. The hen bird is, however, a humble speckled thing, looking very insignificant compared with her imposing consort. The ducks were of many kinds—mallards, teal, widgeon, and a black duck with a white head, known, I think, as the whistling duck.

I frequently tried my luck fishing, but always with indifferent results, though the water teemed with fish of all kinds, notably *pacu*, *dorado* and *surubì*, which the Indians shoot with their bows and arrows. They also capture in the same manner a very large fish called *pirarucu*, the flesh of which they dry in the sun after the manner of cod. This fish, which is of a vivid red and green

in colour and runs up to two or three hundred pounds in weight—perhaps even more—is stated to attack human beings in the water. The only fish which took my bait freely were the *palometa*, which are bright blue and yellow in colour, and are also very dangerous to swimmers, for they attack in large numbers and will literally tear a man to pieces in a few moments. They are near relations to the *piraña*. On many occasions when shooting, if I failed to retrieve a duck immediately and it fell into the river, nothing remained of the bird but a handful of feathers floating on the water. Electric eels, though I never saw any, were stated by the captain of our craft to be common in the waters of the Mamoré.

Another interesting but harmless inhabitant of these waters is the *bufeo*, or fresh-water dolphin. This creature is from six to eight feet long, has breasts shaped like a woman, and is of a delicate grey colour shading into a beautiful pink at the side and belly. Barring the head, which is fish-like, the body has distinctly a human appearance, and when at sunset it lies on the top of the water emitting plaintive sighs the illusion of a mermaid is complete. We only saw the *bufeo* for a couple of days in the broader reaches of the river, and though I made several attempts to shoot one, they sank into deep water the moment the bullet struck them.

As our voyage progressed the river became narrower, and to avoid the shoals we passed alternately near one bank or the other. Alligators of great size became very abundant, and were for the most part quite fearless of the approach of the noisy paddle-wheels of our vessel. They were formidable looking beasts, and the natives, who call them *caymanes*, told me that they frequently attack canoes for the purpose of upsetting them and devouring the persons inside. This gave me an excellent excuse for improving my rifle shooting, and I must have accounted for a considerable number of these beasts. One morning, from my post of observation on the tiny upper deck, I descried a veritable monster cayman lying on a stretch of sand some little distance from the water. He was hoary with age and of a peculiar grey colour, which made me at first think that he was dead. Even the captain, used to such sights, was impressed with the size of the creature and gave the order to slow down as I took aim. I saw that my shot struck him in the head, but again thought that the alligator must have been dead, for it never moved after I fired. A second or two later, however, it began thrashing its gigantic tail in convulsive movements, and quickly a couple of men and I jumped into the dinghy and paddled ashore to where it lay. It was quite dead when we

reached it, and I saw that, by a happy fluke, my explosive bullet had passed through its eye into the brain, causing instant death.

Though I had no desire to increase my baggage, I felt that this was a record beast, and I sent the boat back to the steam launch for an axe with which, after measuring it, we cut off the head. He proved to be just under twenty-seven feet in length, while his girth over the shoulders was equal to that of a full-grown steer. The men extracted from the head two round balls of a substance looking like amber, which had a faint odour of violets. This was the musk, and according to a local tradition, is reputed to bring luck to the possessor. I had to call two more men from the launch to help carry the head into the boat, and its weight was all that four of them could manage. The body of the cayman slipped down the bank into the river, and in a few seconds thousands of *palometas*, attracted by the smell of the blood, attacked the carcass, and, notwithstanding the toughness of the hide, tore it to pieces like wolves. It was an unpleasant sight and gave one an idea of what one's own fate might be if one ventured into the waters infested by these terrible fish. The head of the great cayman proved a very smelly addition to our deck cargo, until, during a time when we moored to the bank collecting fuel, I placed it on a large ants' nest where these industrious insects picked it clean in a couple of hours. On examination I found, imbedded in the skull, two old bullets, which had been there goodness knows how long. It is probable that my lucky shot had rid the river of a precious old criminal to whom, no doubt, the taste of human flesh was by no means unknown.

On the 13th of July we moored alongside a recently established *barraca*, or rubber-collecting station, where the inhabitants, a wild-looking set of Bolivians, were greatly alarmed and excited, having been attacked by Indians about an hour previous to our arrival. It was probably the noise of our paddle-wheels on the otherwise silent waters which caused the assailants to desist from their attack and withdraw into the forest. There was only one casualty, one of the defenders of the *barraca* having his shoulder pierced by an arrow, of which the barb, fortunately for him, was not poisoned, or his life would certainly have been forfeited. That the attack was a serious one was shown by the number of arrows which had cleft the trees in the vicinity of the *barraca*, and the inhabitants were still, when I visited them, in a great state of alarm and apprehension. I did not, however, consider that they were in great danger, for they were well armed and possessed, besides, numbers of large, savage dogs, of which the



“ THE SKELETON OF A LARGE CAYMAN WITH TWO VULTURES PERCHED ON
IT FLOATED SLOWLY DOWN THE STREAM . . . ” [See page 269]

Indians have a particular dread. In conversation with the head-man of the *barraca* I learnt that a day or two previously one of his men, spying an Indian in the bush, had fired at him, though he did not know with what result as he was too frightened to go and look. Probably, however, the shot must have killed or wounded the Indian, whose tribe then retaliated by attacking the stronghold of the hated Bolivians. I felt no little sympathy with the Indians, and asked the head-man why he did not attempt to cultivate more friendly relations with their neighbours of the forest. The head-man, a big, swarthy man of about fifty years of age, looked at me contemptuously and exclaimed, much in the spirit of the Spanish conquerors, "*Son infieles y hay que matarlos*" ("They are heathen and must be killed"). I should have much liked to remain at the *barraca* for a while in the hope of witnessing a renewed attack on the part of the Indians, but the captain, having taken on board his wood, was anxious to get under way again, so I returned to the steamer. In the course of the afternoon I saw a strange sight—the skeleton of a large cayman, with two vultures perched on it, reluctant to leave their loathsome meal of decayed flesh, floating slowly down the river past us. The grim head of the monster, his extended jaws armed with powerful teeth, his whitening bones, which contrasted with the sombre hue of the birds of death poised on him, formed an impressive spectacle and one which seemed to me symbolic of the Amazonian rubber lands; for here death lurked everywhere: in the air from the bites of innumerable insects; in the forests at the hands of the beasts and one's fellow-man; and in the water, which was the home of innumerable foes perhaps even more ferocious than those of the land.

On the following day, when our launch was moored as usual, I shouldered my rifle and went in search of food for the pot. The forest at this particular spot was open and the trees were of great size, many of them, indeed, of gigantic dimensions. There was very little brush, but in spite of this the minute ticks which fell from the branches were so numerous that a pair of white duck trousers which I was wearing was literally covered with them. I walked on rather fast for some distance hoping for, and indeed expecting, an easy shot at some animal in these open park-like glades, when I suddenly realized with a shock that I had lost my sense of direction. I retraced my steps, I went off to the right and then to the left, and returned to the original spot where I had been standing with a cold feeling of fear knocking at my heart. But I did not, fortunately, lose my presence of mind. I sat down on a fallen tree, lit a cigarette, and started to think matters out. Owing to the thickness of the foliage I

could get no clear view of the sun ; but after sitting still for a minute the sense of direction seemed to return. There lies the river, I decided, not in front of me but behind, and I set off in this direction, hopeful, but not altogether confident. I walked fast, and in about an hour, to my inexpressible relief, I saw the Mamoré shining through the trees, and the steamer a couple of hundred yards below where I stood. Nearby was a native hut, and entering I found a half-caste and his family at their midday meal. On my asking for some water, he gave me a large tumbler mixed with molasses, which tasted like nectar, for my lips were parched through my recent anxiety of mind, not to speak of my exertions. After satisfying my thirst I told the owner of the hut that I had been near losing my way in the forest.

"What do you suppose would have been your fate if you had really been lost?" he said.

"The jaguars might have eaten me," I said lightly.

"That is possible," he assented ; "but it is far more likely that you would have been devoured by ants."

I asked him if he meant this as a joke.

"Not at all," he replied, "I speak in all seriousness. If you had really been lost you would have walked on and on in the forest, till you halted from fatigue. Then you would have seen the ants collect round you from all sides. Instinct would have compelled you to go on, but the time would not be far distant when, exhausted by lack of food and water, you would go no farther. You would have lain down, and the ants would have collected round you in their myriads and would have eaten you."

It was not a pleasant thought, but I realized that the man was very likely right in what he said. I then bade him good-bye, and as I passed out of the door of the hut I saw on a rubbish heap the skeleton of the giant *armadillo*, a rare beast, for which the Zoological Museum would have given a handsome sum of money. The man said he had killed it some months ago nearby in the forest, and told me I might take it if I wished, but I refused as it was too cumbersome ; and, moreover, the head and claws were missing. I told the man, however, to try and get another specimen intact, and that some scientist would pay him a handsome sum for it. With this we parted and I returned to the steamer to undress and rub my body with petroleum to remove the hundreds of small ticks which had already worked their way into my skin. My clothes I hung on deck until wind and sun cleansed and purified them from these detestable insects.

At our evening meal the captain remarked that he was surprised that I had not come across a jaguar on my hunting expeditions, for, he said, they were plentiful in the country we were traversing, and one usually got a glimpse of one or more of these beasts every voyage. By an odd coincidence, on the following morning, just after I had drunk my coffee, as the launch rounded a sharp bend, I saw a large jaguar, which, probably unaware of our approach, was playing with the remains of a dead alligator. The mate, who was steering, saw the animal at the same moment as I did, and slowed down to enable me to shoot. There was only time, however, for a quick shot, and my bullet passed through the hind quarters of the jaguar, which leapt up a steep bank and then fell rolling down again. I thought the beast was mortally wounded, but it jumped up again and was off into the bush. Meantime the mate, who was a Paraguayan and a sporting fellow, got the dinghy ready, and, accompanied by my two Airedales, we landed and dashed off in hot pursuit of the tiger, whose tracks, marked by an occasional splash of blood, were clearly visible. The mate had a long knife and I my rifle, and we followed the chase as quickly as possible, first through a swamp up to our waists in mire, in which I lost both my shoes, and then into a cane break, so thick that it was barely possible to move one's arms. Here the heat was absolutely suffocating, and the perspiration streamed down my forehead so profusely that I was half blinded by it. Insects of every kind stung fiercely, but we hardly felt them, so great was our excitement.

After pushing our way for a short while a small pool of blood showed that the jaguar was not far off, and we halted to take counsel, our situation being one of considerable danger, for at any moment the jaguar might leap on us. The risk was further increased by the fact that my miserable dogs refused to hunt and crouched at my heels in a most abject way. After a rapid survey of the ground, we saw that the tracks ended in a dense bamboo thicket. There was no doubt that the jaguar lay concealed in its depths. So we made a detour and approached from the other side, where the going was easier, though the bamboo undergrowth was still so dense that I was able only with difficulty to move my arms and get my rifle up to my shoulder. I was in front carrying my rifle at the ready, and was closely followed by the Paraguayan mate, who with his long knife cleared the many entanglements which impeded progress at every step. The two dogs at this stage of the hunt had disappeared. Pushing our way slowly and laboriously on, I was just thinking that the jaguar must have got away, when he

burst through the bamboos directly in front of me, and for a second faced me, jaws open and snarling savagely. There was no time even to get my rifle up to my shoulder, but fortunately my bullet struck him full in the chest and he fell dead within a few feet of where I stood. Utterly exhausted, my clothes torn to tatters by the thorns, and shoeless, it was yet a splendid moment in my life to have vanquished in a hand-to-hand fight the lord of the South American jungle, and over his body I shook hands with the gallant Paraguayan mate, to whose sporting assistance I owed, in great measure, my success. We then returned by a less difficult route to our vessel, which had moored alongside the bank, and having obtained the assistance of three of the sailors, they returned with the mate to bring back and skin the jaguar. As for myself, drenched in perspiration, muddy, and weary, I jumped into the river to cleanse and refresh myself, quite regardless of alligators and savage fish. I will own, however, that I was very quick in getting out again! The next step after the skin of the jaguar had been removed and pegged out on the deck to dry was to requisition the services of the mate to remove the many thorns which were imbedded in my feet. This operation lasted for nearly an hour, by which time we were well away from the scene of our exciting exploit, and had, in fact, left the low-lying, unhealthy forest lands of the rubber country for the open plains of Mojos. My relief at having seen the last of the depressing country and people was indescribable, and my spirits rose as I gazed over the broad plains on which innumerable herds of cattle could be seen grazing.

On the 16th of July we left the Mamoré and ascended one of its tributaries, the Yacuma, until we reached the old Jesuit settlement of Santa Ana. Whilst moored alongside the bank opposite this village the Paraguayan mate pointed out to me a species of fish of which several were swimming about on the top of the water, and three of which I succeeded in catching with a small hook and a piece of raw meat. They were the famous *candirú*, a small fish about three to four inches long with a pointed snout and a row of minute but very sharp and poisonous spikes running down its back. Incredible though it may seem, this fish will attack swimmers and force its way into the most delicate parts of their bodies with such force that it can only be cut out with a knife. On my return to England I presented a specimen of one of the fish to Professor Boulanger, of the South Kensington Natural History Museum, and was interested to note that this scientist was fully aware of the strange and very unpleasant habits of this fish.

On the 19th of July we re-descended the Yacuma, and on the following day arrived at a spot called Trapiche, where I disembarked with my baggage and two dogs, and hiring a conveyance drove to Trinidad, a distance of about ten miles. The first half of my journey was ended.

CHAPTER XXX

A DELIRIOUS JOURNEY

TRINIDAD, which was originally a settlement founded by the Jesuits, is a straggling village containing perhaps some three to four thousand inhabitants, living remote from the world and in happy ignorance of the stress of modern conditions. It is the centre of the cattle industry of the province of Mojos, which supplies the surrounding country, including the rubber lands, with beef, both fresh and dried in the form of *charqui*. Many of the *estancieros* are the owners of large tracts of land, almost as large as a European State, and on these thousands of semi-wild cattle graze in a state of freedom which is only interrupted by occasional rodeo. Political power is almost entirely in their hands, and they govern, not wholly unwisely, according to their lights and capacities. Life in these remote spots is a simple affair, and poor and rich live very much in the same way, for there is food for all and luxuries are unobtainable.

I was lodged in a small house, built like all the others of sun-dried mud with a thatched roof above, which was the property of a German, then absent on business in the interior. Having received and returned the visits of the authorities I was free to enjoy the pleasures of the land after having been for so long cramped up in the narrow quarters of the steam launch "Chimoré."

A horse was placed at my disposal, and on this animal I visited several of the neighbouring cattle ranches, where I was hospitably entertained. It was a great game country, and at one ranch where I stopped the skins of six jaguars, recently shot, were pegged out to dry. There was also an abundance of spotted deer (*guazù*) and of ostriches. The latter afforded capital sport, being hunted on horseback, and, when overhauled, shot with a rifle or lassoed in the fashion of the native cowboys. They are very fast and a good horse is needed to overhaul them. Horses are, however, relatively scarce in this country, owing to the devastation caused by *mal de cadera*, a disease attacking the spinal marrow and usually proving fatal. For this reason mules, which are immune from it, are greatly in request on the *estancias*, and for purposes of travel oxen, trained specially for riding, are frequently used. A few years ago large herds of wild horses—the descendants of those introduced into the country by the Spanish conquerors—roamed over the great plains of Mojos,

but disease has also taken its toll of these picturesque survivals, and at the time when I visited the country they were very rarely to be seen. Indeed, I never saw one myself. Wild oxen are, however common enough and are very savage, affording excellent sport with a rifle.

Having seen something of this wild country, I now set about making preparations for my long overland journey from Trinidad to Santa Cruz, which city, it will be remembered, I visited shortly after my first arrival in Bolivia.

It took some days before I was able to obtain mules and a couple of men to accompany me as far as San Miguelito, the first stage of my journey. All was ready for my departure on the morning of the 25th of July, 1913, when I was suddenly attacked by a violent fever, which showed that I had not been fortunate enough to pass through the low-lying lands of the rubber country without paying the customary tax on health. It was a very violent attack, worse than any form of malaria which I had previously experienced, and there was to my perhaps rather strained nerves something almost uncanny in the strength and intensity of the fever, which seemed like the grip of some wild beast trying to worry my life out. As soon as the attack was over I felt much better and decided to start on my journey that afternoon.

An old man, who was the owner of the *estancia* of San Miguelito, was returning home after some weeks spent in the amenities of Trinidad society, and asked permission to travel with me, a request which I, of course, readily granted. In his early life he had played some part in the politics of his country, being one of President Magarejo's supporters; but after the death of the latter he had emigrated to these parts and amassed a considerable fortune. Though over seventy-five years of age, he was hardy and more active than many men of thirty, and was in the full possession of all his faculties. He was a widower, his wife having died some years ago, but he supported several mistresses, and had, I was told, upwards of two hundred illegitimate children.

We travelled till darkness set in, when, missing our tracks, we were forced to make our camp for the night in the long grass of the prairie, an uncomfortable arrangement in view of the danger from snakes and noxious insects. However, we managed to make a fire, which gave us light to eat our evening meal, after which we turned in. I offered the use of my light, portable camp bed to the old *estanciero*, which he was glad to accept, and myself slept on my ponchos laid on the ground. Our animals were all tethered nearby, and before going to sleep the men heaped up a

good supply of wood on the fire to keep off the jaguars. Though the day had been oppressive the night was tempered by a cool breeze blowing over the plains, and it was not long before the members of our small party were wrapt in slumber.

For the next three days we travelled over the great plain, and would have made good progress but for the fact that my fever had returned and made it necessary for me to dismount and rest for a while when the attack was on me. This usually started at about eleven in the morning, the first symptoms being that earth, sky, and trees seemed to become enveloped in a blue mist. Then came the cold fit, when it seemed that I was suddenly transported to some Arctic clime and my teeth chattered so that I could barely cling to my saddle. This passed in about half an hour's time, to be succeeded by a burning fever coupled with an agonizing thirst, and I became so giddy that I was obliged to dismount, spread a poncho on the ground, and lie down; then delirium seized me and I knew no more until I recovered my senses and awoke, drenched in perspiration and parched with thirst. I carried a water-bottle, which I filled every morning before leaving the spot where we had camped overnight, but it did not contain enough to satisfy the burning thirst caused by the fever, and as the country was very dry I often had to put up with my thirst until such time as we reached a stream or water-hole. Between the attacks I felt quite well and even strong, though I had no stomach for food, a cup of strong tea with sugar in it being my greatest stand-by and comforter.

My two dogs were in moderately good condition, and had become more lively since leaving the dense forests in the low country. They ran ahead hunting, and on one occasion, being chased by some wild cattle, they scampered back to me for protection, bringing the herd along with them. For a moment I thought they were going to charge our party, but they halted a hundred yards off, stamping the ground and looking very savage. I was tempted to shoot one of these animals, but refrained as it seemed useless slaughter, for we could not carry the meat on our already overloaded pack-mule. These wild cattle do not, as far as I could see, differ in any way from the domesticated stock, except that they are somewhat smaller in size. The *estancieros*, however, wage a perpetual war on them, both for the sake of the meat and hide, and also because the wild bulls entice the tame cows away from the herds.

The country through which we passed was almost unpopulated. Here and there we stopped at the hut of some small ranchman, whose humble roof proved an agreeable shelter from the sun during my daily bout of fever. The people we did see

were half-caste Bolivians of a peculiarly repellent semi-animal type.

On the 29th of June, when within half a mile's ride from San Miguelito, while the old *estanciero* and my two men were riding on in advance, I had an unusually strong attack of fever, and must in my delirium have either got off my horse or fallen off. When I came to my senses I found I was lying under a palm-tree and in a very weak condition. Two vultures were hovering in the blue sky just above my head, and as I watched them, in a detached way, I noticed that they were being joined by others, and that some were already perched in a withered tree which stood close by. These loathsome birds were gathering round me in the expectation, no doubt, that I should soon be too weak to defend myself from the attacks of their powerful talons and beaks. When a man or an animal is sick or near to death these birds know at once by some sort of instinct which is very difficult to account for, unless the explanation is that in such cases our bodies and those of animals give off an effluvium which attracts their keen sense of smell. Certain it is, anyhow, that they do not pay the least attention to a man or beast lying in the open asleep. In this case, however, the vultures' instinct was at fault, for I had by no means given in. The first thing to do, however, was to get some water to still my raging thirst, for my water-bottle, which lay at my side with my rifle, was empty. Getting up, I wandered shakily through the palm forest and, as I expected, found a marsh nearby, and lying down on my stomach drank greedily at the first pool which I found. The water was rank with the taste of the decaying vegetation which formed the soil of this marsh, but to me it was as nectar. I drank my fill, and must then have again become unconscious, for the next thing I remembered was the jolting of a springless car drawn by oxen, in which I found myself lying at full length, and which brought me into San Miguelito. It seemed that I had not been missed until my riderless mule, straying into the *estancia*, drew attention to my absence. A search-party had then started to look for me, and, finding me unconscious, had gone back for the cart which finally conveyed me to my destination. I was brought into a room with no other furniture than an old rough camp bed, composed of a piece of canvas stretched across a frame on which I was glad to lay my aching limbs. It was by no means a luxurious abode, and the ceiling, which was made of split bamboo canes, sheltered a large colony of bats, which, during night and day, chattered ceaselessly and treated without the slightest respect the bed on which I lay. I was too ill to care much, and after another violent attack of fever I slept the clock round and then

awoke weak but refreshed in mind and body. Before lying down I had been careful to secure a large jar filled with water, which I placed on the floor near my bed, for since my arrival nobody had the curiosity to come and see whether I was dead or alive. I got up, dressed, and made my way to the quarters of the old man who had been my companion from Trinidad, who expressed satisfaction at seeing me up and about. He asked me to join him at lunch, and I accepted his invitation, for it must have been fully two days since food of any kind had entered my mouth, but I was too weak to manage more than a little soup and some dry biscuit.

The fever seemed, however, to have burnt itself out for a time, for during the week which I remained at the *estancia* I suffered no relapse; nor did I feel particularly unwell, though the glass revealed to me a dreadful-looking object, my face the colour of an over-ripe lemon, my eyes sunken and preternaturally bright, the counterpart, in fact, of the malarious wretches whom I had pitied in Puerto Velho and Riberalta. My spirits and courage were, however, good, and after a week's rest and feeding up I prepared to take the road again. On the 7th of August, having hired two men and fresh mules from the *estancia*, I left San Miguelito, and after travelling for three days my fever returned and I laid up on the 11th of August in a deserted hut.

On the following day we entered the Monte San Pablo, a forest which has an evil name, as it is inhabited by two warlike tribes of Indians, the Yanaiguas and the Sirionos, who, as I had been warned both in Trinidad and San Miguelito, are wont to attack travellers. It was easy to see that my two men were very apprehensive, and they urged on me the importance of keeping a good look out, and of travelling at full speed without halting until we had passed the danger zone.

The track was a narrow one, and on either side was dense forest. I rode ahead with my rifle lying across the pommel of my saddle, ready for use, and my eyes peering into the depths of the forest, expecting every moment to see the scarlet plumes of an Indian brave drawing his bow at me. It was exciting work. Every now and again one of my companions would point out the narrow tracks made by the wild men—tracks so narrow that they seemed to me more like those of wild beasts than of human beings. But the Indian walks with a perfectly straight foot and needs much less room than a European, who turns his toes out.

After travelling thus for about an hour I felt symptoms of fever coming on, and in spite of a great effort of will not to give in to it I at length became so giddy that I could not remain in the

saddle any longer. I therefore got off my mule, spread my poncho on the ground, and laid down with my rifle and ammunition close at hand. As soon as I had done this the two men began muttering together, and presently came up and said that it was very dangerous to remain in the forest, and that they were going on and I must follow as soon as I was able to. Angry and disgusted with both their cowardice and lack of sympathy, I told them that I would put an explosive bullet through the back of the first man who attempted to go on without me, and realizing that I really meant what I said they declared their willingness to remain with me. But I did not trust either of them, and kept my rifle in my hand during the hour which passed before I felt able to remount and continue my journey. Travelling as fast as our mules would go, we left the forest at about sunset, and going on for another hour or so camped for the night on the banks of the River San Pablo, where we made a fire on which we cooked our evening meal.

I had now become so used to my attacks of fever that I looked on them quite as a matter of course. The most unpleasant part of the disease was the thirst which it occasioned and the difficulty of obtaining water to appease it.

On leaving the San Pablo in the morning I filled my water-bottle and a calabash which I had picked up in an empty hut, and thus provided I hoped to give my tormentor the slip. At about eleven in the forenoon malaria, as usual, held me in its grip, and although I had made the firmest resolutions to take my water in sips and to hold a certain supply in reserve, the fever was so violent and the ensuing thirst so great that I had very soon drunk up my supply. We were now within a few hours' ride of the Franciscan Mission of Guarayos, and my thoughts dwelt happily on the attention and comforts which I knew I should obtain from the good friars of the brown habit. But the sun beat down with a fierce heat, my mule was tired and needed constant driving with whip and spur, and nowhere could I get a drop of water to moisten my parched lips. Under these conditions the road seemed long and weary, and it was a relief that about four in the afternoon we emerged from the forest into a large and extremely orderly village, which seemed, however, to be deserted, for not a soul was to be seen as we rode through it and halted in the *plaza*. Here, after waiting for some time, an Indian, dressed in a shirt and trousers, made his appearance, and I asked him to bring me a large calabash of water, which he did. After I had drunk it, I told him to go and announce my arrival to the priest. He went off, but returned again in a few minutes saying that the priest had not yet risen from his siesta, and that

he dared not wake him. On learning this I lay down where I was, being very exhausted, and must have fallen asleep, for when I awoke I found myself in a civilized bed with sheets, while a brown-habited monk was leaning over me, holding a plate of chicken soup in his hands. Yielding to his entreaty I drank the soup, and feeling better after it, again fell asleep.

The good Samaritan was Father Peter, the priest in charge of the Mission of Guarayos, and, thanks to his skilful nursing and feeding, I was sufficiently recovered in a few days to be up and about again. Father Peter was a native of the Austrian Tyrol, and he left the place of his birth over twenty years ago to become a missionary in this wild and remote spot. He was a tall and gentle-looking man of about forty years of age, and had a strange far-away look in his eyes, which told of long years spent in solitude.

As soon as my strength was somewhat returned my first act was to visit the Mission under his guidance.

The Guarayos Missions, which were founded about half a century ago by the Order of Saint Francis, consist of five stations, namely, Ascension, San Pablo, Yotau, Urubicha, and Yaguarù. In each of these a missionary of the Order is in charge, both in the capacity of priest and administrator, and they are themselves subordinate to the Father Prefect of Tarata in Cochabamba, who makes periodical visits of inspection to the Missions. Three of the resident missionaries were of Austrian and two of Italian nationality.

The population of the Missions consists of five thousand Indians, including women and children, belonging to the Guarayos race, a tribe which, previous to their pacification by the Franciscans, lived in a wild state in the regions where the Mission is situated. They speak a language which is closely allied to the Guarani, one of the oldest and most widely spread aboriginal tongues of the South American continent. The administration of the Mission is simple. Every thirty Indians are under the orders of a *Capitano*, who is elected by themselves. The *Capitanos* are responsible to the *Cacique*, or Indian chief, who is himself responsible to the Priest in Charge of the Mission for the maintenance of law and order.

In the event of an Indian being guilty of a punishable offence, such as robbery, fighting, insubordination, or drunkenness, he is haled by the *Capitano* before the *Cacique*, who brings him in his turn before the priest, when he is sentenced to a certain number of strokes with the cat. There are no prisons.

In each of the Mission Stations there are separate schools for boys and girls, where reading, writing, arithmetic, and religious

doctrine are taught by trained Indian schoolmasters and mistresses. The Indian girls, who were, I was told, apter pupils than the boys, remain at school until they marry, usually at the age of fifteen or sixteen. They wear a simple garment, the *tupoi*, open at the neck and not ungraceful, and a variety of beads and coral ornaments. Though not beautiful, their features are pleasing, and they have splendid heads of long, dark hair, which is not coarse like that of so many Indian tribes. Both sexes are extremely clean in their persons, and bathe regularly three or four times a day.

The Missions are entirely self-supporting, producing all the necessities of life, such as meat, vegetables, sugar, coffee, salt, and pepper. Cotton for clothing is worked on handmade looms, hats are manufactured from the leaves of palm-trees, the leather workers produce saddles and sandals, and the table-services of the priests are artistically fashioned by native Guarayo silver-smiths. Adult males, and, in time of pressure, the bigger boys at school, give three days' work a week on the Mission fields and in the various industries, being free for the remainder of the week to work on their own plots of land. If they put in voluntarily more work for the Mission they are paid either in money or kind. The women do no work other than that of a domestic nature.

I wondered what hold religion had obtained over this primitive race, which was so strongly imbued with their own beliefs, and Father Peter confessed that they had, indeed, retained many of their tribal superstitions and customs. For instance, when a child is born the husband retires to his hammock for five days, during which period his wife has to wait on him in addition to looking after herself and the newborn child.

Females, on attaining the age of puberty, are secluded for the period of a month, during which time they are kept fasting and must on no account allow their eyes to fall on a dog or hen or a great misfortune will come upon them. In spite of their robust physique the Guarayos are a short-lived race, for they usually die between the age of forty-five and fifty. They know their race is run, and betake themselves to their hammocks never to rise again. "I have often envied them," said Father Peter to me, "for they die so quietly."

The Indian dies in a sitting posture on his hammock, and his wife and friends place by his side his bow and arrows, manioc and *chicha* to sustain him on the long journey he has to make. But he must not follow the broad road, for this leads to the heaven of the *Carai* (the white men), who, excepting the missionaries, have been his enemies throughout life. He must tread the narrow, thorny path, intercepted by deep, swiftly-flowing rivers,

and guarded by monster alligators and fierce animals of the forest, until at length he arrives in the land of the *Abuelo* (the ancestor), where he has food and drink in abundance and a limitless region, untrod by the foot of the white man, in which to hunt "*in sæcula sæculorum.*"

What I saw in Guarayos during my week's stay proved to me that the Indian, if properly treated and trained, makes a good workman at any of the crafts, and that the administration of these modern Catholic Missions, founded on the well-known precepts of the Jesuits, is still to-day superior to anything known in South America. I was not expected at the Mission, so any suggestion of whitewashing is out of the question, and during the whole of my stay I saw no evidence of crime, disorder, or drunkenness on the part of any member of the population. It would be difficult to say as much of any town in South America, and points to the admirable discipline maintained by the priests in control.

Having been now without any return of fever for some days, and having to some extent recovered my strength, I determined to continue my journey. I was supplied with a good riding horse, pack-mules, and two Indians of the Mission, who, I felt sure, would prove pleasanter companions than the men I had hitherto had with me. As I left Guarayos at dawn on the 21st of August, after receiving the blessing of Father Peter, all the Indians turned out to give me a cheer and wish me God-speed on my journey. In spite, however, of this warm send-off, and the fact that my new animals were well-fed and willing, the fates were not propitious, for heavy rains fell shortly after nine o'clock in the morning, and continued until I arrived at Yotau, where I was hospitably received by the missionary in charge of the station, who was an Italian. After leaving the following morning I was again attacked by fever, which seemed to have redoubled its strength after the short respite I had enjoyed while at Guarayos, and I, with difficulty, reached Puente that evening.

CHAPTER XXXI

RETURN TO CIVILIZATION

IT was raining when I knocked at the door of the only house of which this wild and desolate spot boasted. It was opened by a youngish man between thirty-five and forty, who bade me come in, and, noting my condition, showed me into a room with a single camp bed, on which I was glad to lie down. After resting for a while I felt somewhat better, and the owner of the place invited me to join him at his evening meal, of which, however, I partook very sparingly. My host was an Austrian of good birth and education, and he declared himself overjoyed to meet someone who could talk his language and give him news of the outer world. After chatting for an hour or so I wished him good night, saying that I should be away at dawn the following day. My host accompanied me to my room and did his best to dissuade me from starting next morning, begging me to rest with him for some days as I was not in a fit condition to travel and overcome the difficulties of the road which lay before me. I was, however, determined not to give in to ill health, and told him firmly that I was going on, on which he said no more and left me. I lay down and passed a very disturbed night, being delirious at frequent intervals, and on the welcome appearance of dawn I rose, shaking and tottering, to put on my clothes, but found to my astonishment that they had disappeared. Garments, boots, spurs, and hat had all vanished, nor could I find the owner of the house nor my own Indians anywhere about. I therefore went back to bed, fell asleep, and, being again attacked by my enemy, was unconscious till past noon, when I opened my eyes and found my host watching me. He brought me some soup, which I took, and then explained that, seeing how ill I was, he had entered my room in the night, removed my clothes, and told my Indians to keep out of the way in the morning. Perhaps his action saved my life ; anyway I was too weak and dispirited to protest, and resigned myself to the inevitable.

After about ten days the violence of the fever abated somewhat, and I began to get about and take an interest in life. There was an abundance of game in the neighbourhood, and, my horse being in first-rate condition with rest and good food, I rode about the country, accompanied by my dogs, and had good sport with ostriches, wild pig, and deer. Whenever I felt an attack of fever coming on I hastened back home and had it comfortably over in

the shelter of my host's hospitable roof. By this time I was considerably weakened by the disease and had become as thin as a lath, for I ate very little, as I found that food, in anything but very small quantities, increased the violence of the attacks. This I noticed was particularly the case when I ate fruit or fish, which should I think, be avoided by all sufferers from malaria.

My host was well educated and cultivated and gave me much interesting information regarding the country and its inhabitants, the wild Indians, with whom he had tried vainly to establish relations. He had, he told me, tied presents to the branches of trees, little packets of salt, tobacco, and a cheap knife or two, in the places where he knew they would pass, but for many days they remained untouched, the Indians fearing, no doubt, some white man's trap. At length, however, they were taken, and though the donor never received any direct acknowledgment he believed that they looked on him as a friend, as neither he nor his belongings were on any occasion molested. Salt is greatly prized by the Indians, for it is but rarely found in the forest, and they use wood-ash to replace it. Their food consists mainly of the game they kill and manioc or maize, which they plant when they remain stationary for some time in one spot. They make *chicha* in a similar manner to that of the Bolivians, and at times indulge in great drinking orgies. Many secrets of the forest, unknown to European science, are undoubtedly theirs. *Curare*, in which they dip the tips of their arrows, is a poison so effective and instantaneous that an animal, however lightly struck, falls dead almost in his tracks. Yet I believe that the composition of *curare* is unknown to science. The Indians also smear their arrow-heads with putrid meat, but this is probably a less rapid poison and only used when the *curare* is unobtainable. In shooting game they always aim at the extremities of the legs, and when the animal falls immediately cut off the part struck by the arrow, so that the meat may not be affected by the poison. They are, of course, marvellous stalkers and absolutely dead shots with their bows at short range. Those who have lived among the wild Indians—and there are a good many people in the Amazon valley who have had this experience, whether as prisoners or of their own free will—maintain that the Indians have a sure cure for snake-bites, though of what the remedy consists none have been able to discover, as its secret is closely guarded. Possibly the treatment is the same as that of the Lenguas, which I have already described. Certain it is, anyway, that they have an exact and profound knowledge of the value of the medicinal plants with which nature is so prodigal in these lands, and it is possible that some of them, at any rate, are not

known to modern botanical science. Such was the information which my host imparted to me as we sat on the veranda of an evening and watched the moon rise over the dark and mysterious forest, which was the repository of so many of nature's jealously guarded secrets.

After remaining a month at Puente and finding that, though my health was slightly improved, the fever attacks did not leave me, I determined to continue my journey. My reasons for taking this decision were that the rainy season was now fast setting in, and that, if I did not make a start at once, I should be held up for another six months. I knew well enough that in my state of health the journey would not be an easy one, and that I ran a considerable risk of leaving my bones by the wayside, but everything seemed better than remaining idle where I was.

On September 22nd I accordingly set forth, accompanied by my host, who, having vainly tried to prevent my starting, wished to see me as far as the first halting-place. Again I had no luck, for heavy rain fell during the afternoon and, delayed by the bad state of the track, we only reached our destination after dark. We put up in a mud hut belonging to some wild-looking ranchmen, which only boasted of a single large room, where, after some supper, we lay down to rest. I passed a very restless and disturbed night with fever, and in the intervals of consciousness felt very pessimistic as to my chance of surviving the journey which lay before me, for the repeated attacks of fever had now left me very weak indeed. Help was, however, at hand, though I did not know it. In the morning, as I was rolling up my blankets preparatory to a start, an old man came up to me and remarked that I looked very ill, and that he feared that I should not reach my journey's end alive. Pretending to be more sanguine than I really was, I told him that the change of air would assuredly do me good. The old man said, "No, unless you have a remedy you will die," and then concluded by asking if I had tried tar. There was something in his way of speaking that impressed me, and I clung desperately to the ray of hope which he held out. I replied that for the last three months I had been dosing myself with quinine, but without any good effect, and that I would be very glad to try his remedy if he would supply me with it. I waited in no little suspense for his reply, and was overjoyed when he said, "I have a small amount of the remedy and will give you some." On saying this he produced from behind a beam in the roof a little phial of a French preparation of extract of tar, and half filling an empty medicine bottle, he handed it to me, telling me to take a dozen drops three or four times a day. I thanked the old man warmly, and asked to be allowed to pay

for the medicine, which in this remote spot must literally have been worth its weight in gold, but he refused, saying he only hoped it would do me good.

I at once mixed myself a dose of the tar, and, having swallowed it, I shook the old man by the hand, mounted my horse, which my Indian servant held in readiness, and set forth fired with new hopes of regaining my health and strength. During the whole of that day I felt better, and the evening and night passed without the dreaded attack. I continued to drink my precious elixir, and for three whole days and nights, during which time I regained much of my strength, I was free from the fever. Then it returned, but the attacks were less severe, and my spirits were raised by the fact that I was well on my homeward road, and that the greatest difficulties now lay behind me. I was fortunate, too, in the weather, which was bright and sunny, and much less hot than in the low-lying lands through which I had passed.

The country through which I was now travelling was a fertile one, but the numerous empty huts which we passed showed that it was almost completely depopulated. Some of the inhabitants had no doubt been carried off to work in the rubber lands, while others, too weak to defend themselves, had retreated before the menace of the wild Indians, who were, I was informed, numerous on the banks of the Rio Grande, which lay on my right, and in the unexplored country to my left. Jaguars were also stated to be very plentiful, though I saw none. One evening, however, my two dogs having strayed into the bush, I presently heard them barking furiously, and after a while only one returned, covered with blood and a large wound in his chest. He had been badly mauled, and though I tried to sew up the wounds his case was hopeless, and a few days later I was forced to end his troubles with a kindly bullet. His companion never returned, and was, I presumed, killed by an animal, probably a jaguar, which attacked them both. Though they were neither very good or faithful animals, we had come a long and rough road together, sharing perils and hardships, and I missed their company and seeing them trotting patiently alongside of my horse or mule.

Ostriches and deer were fairly plentiful on the road, and I shot two of the latter for food for my two Indians, though I myself took no nourishment other than rice-water three times a day. I found this system of dieting the best means of keeping my fever under control, and when I departed from its strict observance I was usually punished.

One day, in the forest, I came upon a plantation of wild *papaya* (pawpaw in English) and eagerly devoured some of this refreshing fruit, with the result that in the evening I again

collapsed with an attack of my old foe. My sufferings were now, however, far less than those which I had endured on my journey to Guarayos, for an abundance of good drinking water was everywhere obtainable, and besides, my spirits were sustained by the near approach of my journey's end.

On the 25th of September we entered a vast and gloomy forest, known as the Monte Grande, which, like that of San Pablo, had been the scene of numerous attacks on travellers by the Siriono Indians. A few months previously a Bolivian travelling with his wife and two children had been murdered by these savages, and the spot, which we passed, was still marked by the skeletons of several mules and pieces of saddlery which were scattered about.

The forest is nearly fifty miles in length, and a few years ago it was necessary to travel through it in a day at all possible speed and without halting. The Bolivian Government have now, however, built a fort half way, which is manned by some fifty soldiers with an officer in charge, and here I spent the night. Leaving again the next morning, we had a long, waterless ride through the latter part of the forest, and reached the Rio Grande a couple of hours before nightfall. There was a small mud hut pleasantly situated in an orange grove about a mile from the banks of the river, and here I decided to halt and rest until the following day. The inhabitants of the hut were a middle-aged half-caste couple and a girl about sixteen, who received me amiably and prepared a meal of rice and *charqui* for my two followers, and a cup of soup for myself. After taking my food I arranged my camp bed in the little veranda in front of the house, hung my net over it, for the mosquitoes came in swarms from the river, and settled down for what I hoped would prove a well-earned rest. At nightfall, however, I was aroused by the galloping of horses across the prairie, and presently five or six wild-looking Gauchos rode up to the hut and, dismounting, clattered with jingling spurs past my bed into the inner room, which was dimly lighted by a candle stuck in a bottle. From where I lay I could see the owner of the hut produce a demijohn of rum and some glasses, and presently the tinkling of a guitar made itself heard. Then I realized that my prospect of sleep, for some hours at any rate, was impossible. My two men were sleeping in the orange grove a hundred yards or so away, and the only reason why I did not get up and move my bed there was that I feared that the night dew would bring on my fever again. So I lay still where I was, and became more and more irritated as the songs and the shouts of the now drunken men disturbed the stillness of the night. At length, at about twelve o'clock, I heard them

making preparations for their departure, and presently they staggered out into the veranda where I had made my couch. On arrival the Gauchos had not noticed in the darkness that anyone was sleeping there, but now the rays of a late moon lit up the scene and I heard them ask the owner who was there, and his reply that it was a gringo who with two Indians had ridden in at sunset. The men then lurched past me, and one of them stumbled up against my camp bed, almost upsetting it. Thinking it was the accidental clumsiness of a drunken man I said nothing, but after a moment another of the Gauchos having repeated the action, I took my revolver from under my pillow, pulled aside the mosquito-net, and, sitting up in bed, said quietly to them in Spanish that I would shoot the next man who presumed to disturb me in this insolent manner. My reason for thus taking the offensive was that I believed that their behaviour was but a preliminary to an attempt on my life, and that my best chance of saving it was to show that I was fully awake and armed. On hearing me speak the Gauchos retired behind the house, where I heard them muttering together, one of the party apparently exciting the others to attack me, and I heard him repeatedly say, "Let's kill the gringo." I sat still, revolver in hand, counting up my chances. The mud wall of the house, against which my bed stood, gave me protection on one side, and the clear light of the moon was favourable for shooting. I determined, at any rate, to sell my life dearly. Drunk though they were, however, they could not make up their minds to face my revolver, and presently they trooped off to where the horses were tethered, mounted, and galloped away, shouting at the top of their voices. One man was so drunk that he actually rolled off his horse and fell with a thud on the prairie, upon which, to revenge myself for the fright they had given me, I laughed in a loud and provocative manner. Now for a Gaucho to fall off his horse, even if dead drunk, is a lasting disgrace, and for a gringo to laugh at him and shame him before his companions is an insult which normally could only be washed out in blood. But neither he nor his friends returned, and after listening a while, and hearing the horses' gallop die away in the distance, I turned over on my side and fell asleep, not waking until my Indian brought me my cup of coffee.

After crossing the river our road lay through a forest of stunted cabbage palms, and here I saw a rattlesnake of uncommon size. It was lying sunning itself, just off the track we were following, and after watching it for a moment, I told one of the Indians to kill it. As the man stepped warily towards it, the snake suddenly launched itself at him, covering several feet, and only a timely



"LET'S KILL THE GRINGO"



blow of his *machete* saved him from a bite which must have meant sudden death. I got off my horse to examine the snake, which was fully six feet long and of great girth. It had two unusually long poison fangs, and was altogether such a hideous-looking monster that, though dead, it gave me a cold feeling even to look at it.

This was the last incident of my long journey, for after following the course of the Rio Grande for four days, passing through a desolate and unpopulated country, I at length reached what I recognized as the outskirts of Santa Cruz, and presently entered that pleasant, sleepy little hamlet. It was a strange feeling, after my long journey, which had now occupied eight months, through some of the wildest and least-known countries in the world, to find myself once again amongst the haunts of man. With ragged and travel-stained clothes, thin from the effects of fever and privation, and followed by two wild-looking Indians from the forest, my arrival created quite a sensation and the people flocked to their windows as we urged our weary beasts through the narrow streets of the town. The news of our coming was passed from mouth to mouth, and on our arrival at the house of the British Consul, Mr. Bloomfield, this official and his wife were standing on their doorstep in expectation of my coming. They gave me a warm welcome, but seemed surprised to see me, and then I learnt that reports of my death had reached Santa Cruz a month previously, and that the Consul, in order to ascertain the truth of these rumours, had sent a search-party to look for me or my remains. This party had not yet returned. Mr. Bloomfield inquired what I would like to eat and drink, and I could think of nothing more tempting than some bread, which I had not tasted for seven months, and a glass of wine. Having eaten and drunk my fill, I sat with my host, enjoying the unwonted luxury of hearing the news from the outer world, from which I had been so long cut off.

I remained at Santa Cruz for a week to recuperate, and then started for Cochabamba, which I reached in ten days, after suffering from severe attacks of fever on the road. Our Consul, Mr. Barber, at whose house I stayed, showed me great kindness and hospitality, for now my health broke down completely, and for some weeks I was obliged to keep my bed. After my long journey, exposed alternately to fierce sun and to rain and storms, swimming rivers, and making my way on tired beasts through forest and plain, suffering hunger and thirst and sickness, it seemed to me the height of luxury to lie in a comfortable bed with snowy white sheets, delicate food and drink at my disposal, and a kind and sympathizing hostess to nurse me and attend to my every

want. High temperature, prolonged over a number of days, left me weak enough to provide a good excuse for lingering in the mild climate of Cochabamba before I faced the cold and high altitudes of the Andean Cordillera. After some weeks, however, I was sufficiently restored to continue my journey on horseback to Oruro, and thence by train to La Paz, where I arrived at the close of 1913.

The coming year, which was to convulse Europe in war, brought great changes in my own life, and I left South America, where I had spent so many adventurous and stirring years, for good and all.

During the period of my life which is described in these pages I learnt to know more of the countries of Latin America than falls to the lot of most Europeans, and I learnt as well to know the Spanish-American people, not merely the dwellers in the large towns, but the country folk, who are, to my mind, far more interesting. They have their faults, no doubt, as other people have, but manliness, courage, and chivalry are qualities which are not uncommonly found among them, and these, to my mind, may compensate for the lack of other virtues.

As to the countries themselves, the rolling prairie covered with flowers, the gloomy grandeur of the great forests, the angry rush of the river in flood, and the beauty of the lepacho-tree in flower, are things that, once seen, one does not easily forget.



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